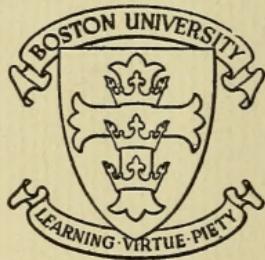


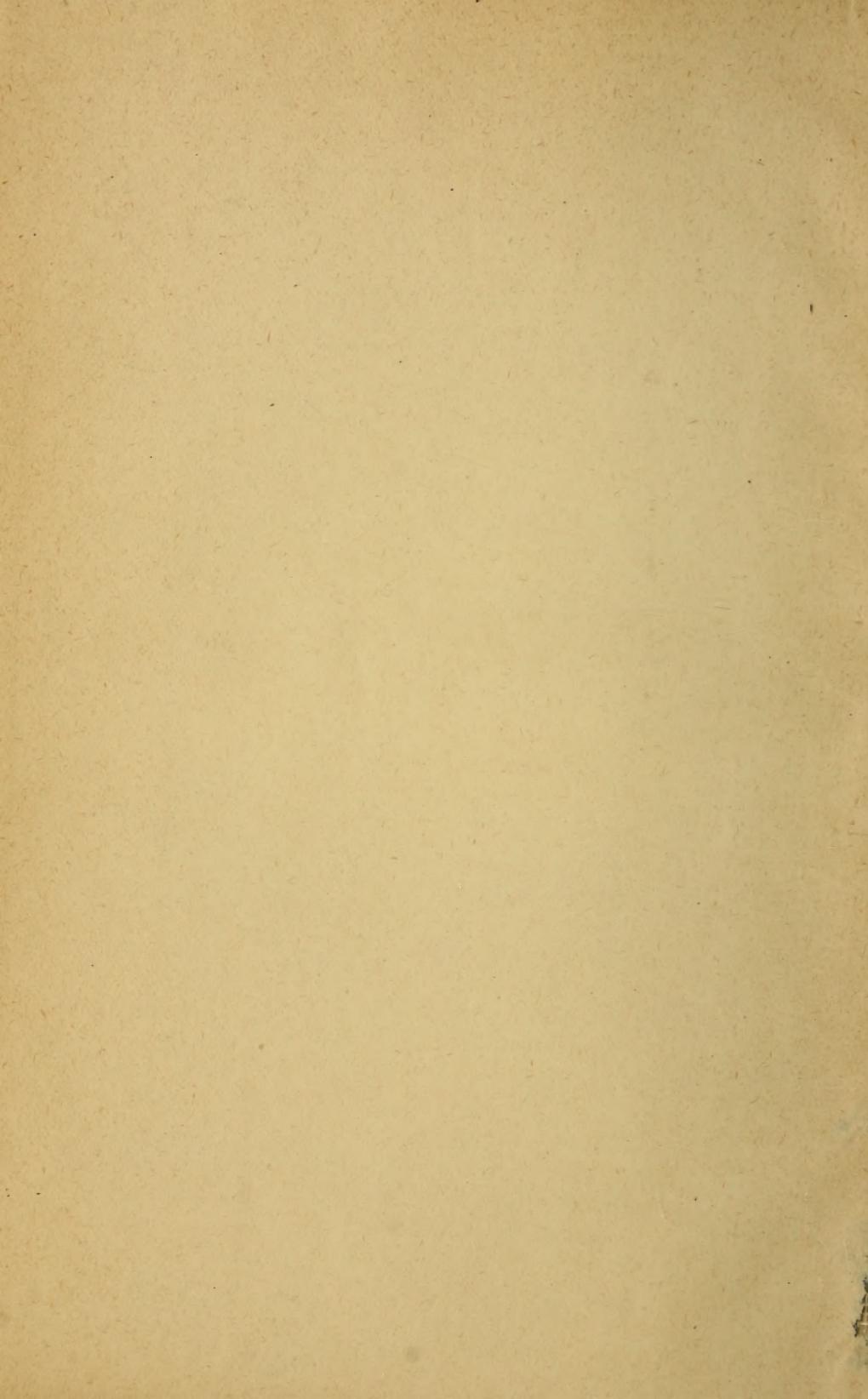


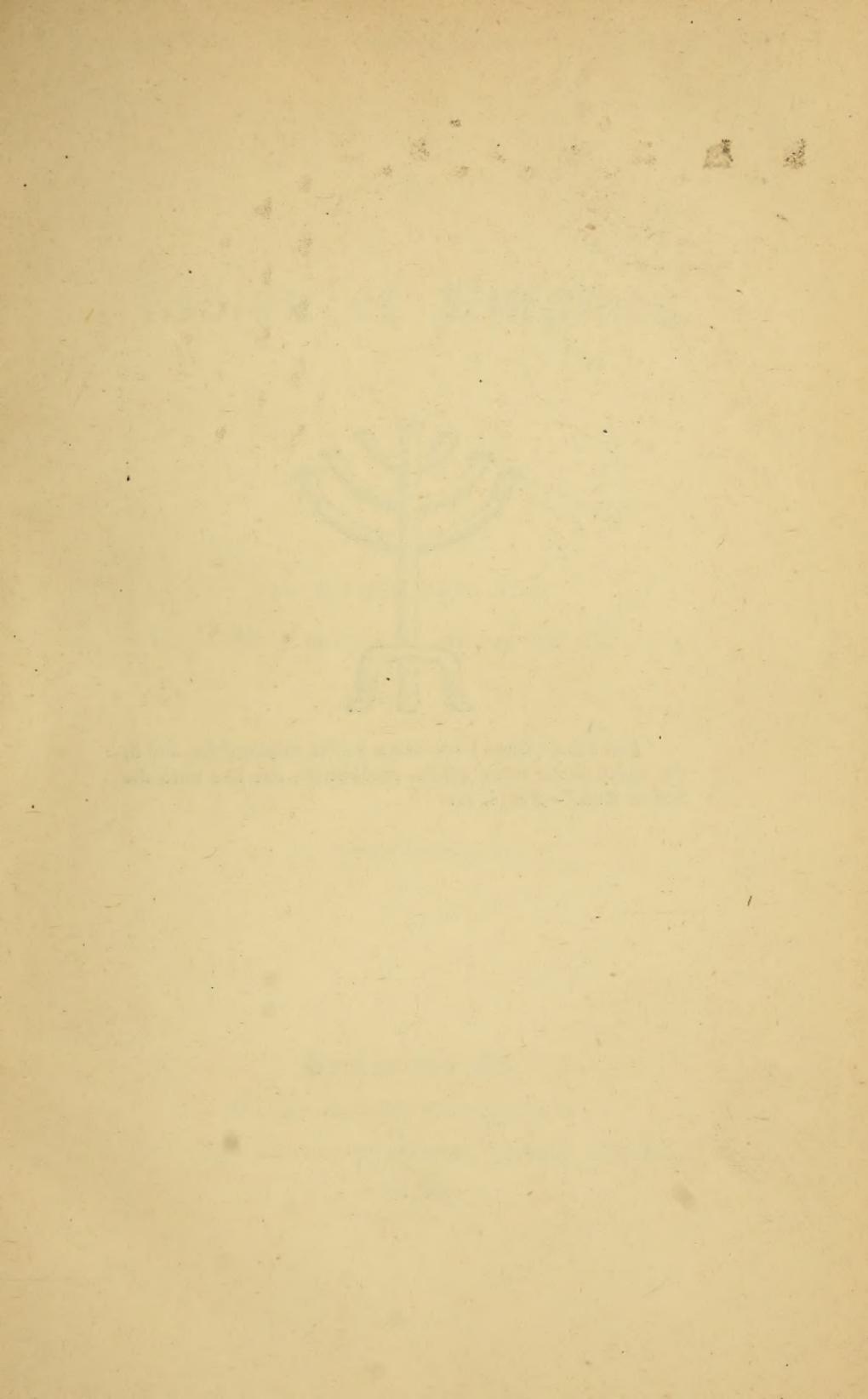
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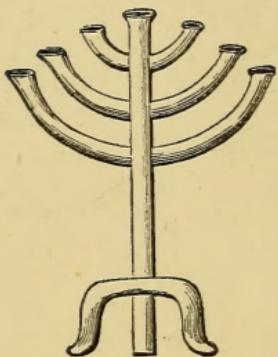


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"And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man."—*Rev. i. 12.*

with the Author's comp^s.

A

Vision of Empires.

BY

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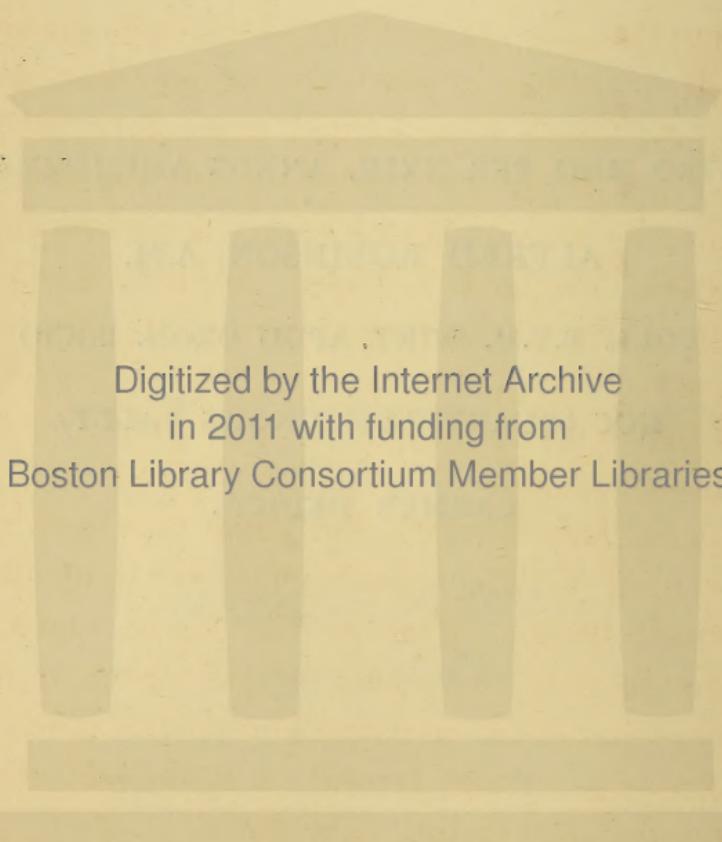
VIRO MIHI PER XXIII. ANNOS AMICISSIMO

ALFRED ROBINSON, A.M.

COLL. B.V.M. WINT. APUD OXON. SOCIO

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P R E F A C E.

THE main object of this poem is to present a picture of the great monarchies and empires which have held at successive epochs the supremacy or leadership of the world, beginning with ancient Egypt and ending with modern England. These empires, in the persons of their principal representatives, are supposed to pass in review before Christ at His second coming, and He is invested with the various insignia of authority—such as the imperial laurel-wreath, the papal tiara, and the crown of Charlemagne—which severally distinguish them. After the First Book I have, in order to vary the action of the poem, represented our Lord as travelling to the different cities—e.g. Athens, Jerusalem, Rome—in which the interest of history culminates.

As it is not to be expected that all parts of the poem will prove equally attractive to all readers, I would advise those who are imperfectly acquainted with Greek and Roman

history, to pass on, after reading the First Book, to the Fourth, the subject of which will be familiar to all students of the Bible, and thence to the last five Books, which are all concerned with modern history. The Seventh Book will be chiefly interesting to lovers of Gibbon, and those who think, with myself, that the Mohammedan world has received but scant justice at the hands of Christians.

The period of time covered by the poem is one year. The empires chosen are, I. the ancient Oriental monarchies, Egypt, Assyria, Persia ; II. Greece ; III. the spiritual empire of Israel ; IV Rome ; V. the empire of the Caliphs ; VI. mediæval Europe, regarded under the two heads of (1) the Papacy, (2) the Holy Roman Empire ; VII. England. The scene is variously laid in Assyria, Athens, ancient Rome, Constantinople, Christian Rome, Venice, Vienna, Winchester, Oxford, and London.

All poets are of course under large obligations to their predecessors as well as to their contemporaries, and I claim no exception to the general rule. My own principal debts, as far as I am able to gauge them, are to the

poet Virgil and to the historian Gibbon,—to Virgil for the form and spirit, to Gibbon for the matter, of the poem. After these, Dante, Shakespeare and the sacred poets of Holy Scripture are the sources from which I have derived most inspiration. In one short piece—that which I have put into the mouth of Plato at p. 117—I have followed the thought and manner of Lord Tennyson, with a closeness, which I hope the noble poet, if my book ever come before his notice, will condone.

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

	Page
EGYPT, ASSYRIA, PERSIA.	I
Notes to Book I.	33
Translations.	38

BOOK II.

GREECE, I.	39
Notes to Book II.	80
Translation.	82

BOOK III.

GREECE, II.	83
Notes to Book III.	125
Translations.	127

BOOK IV.

ISRAEL.	128
Notes to Book IV.	156

BOOK V.

ROME, I.	158
Notes to Book V.	191
Translations.	194

BOOK VI.

	Page
ROME, II.	195
Notes to Book VI.	237
Translations.	239

BOOK VII.

ISLAM.	240
Notes to Book VII.	282

BOOK VIII.

EUROPE, I.—THE PAPACY.	286
Notes to Book VIII.	329
Translations.	331

BOOK IX.

EUROPE, II.—THE EMPIRE, I.	332
Notes to Book IX.	366
Translation.	367

BOOK X.

EUROPE, III.—THE EMPIRE, II.	368
Notes to Book X.	410

BOOK XI.

ENGLAND, I.	412
Notes to Book XI.	450

BOOK XII.

ENGLAND, II.	451
Notes to Book XII.	491

BOOK I.

Egypt, Assyria, Persia.

ARGUMENT.

The nations are assembled for judgment before Christ in the great plain, lying between the Holy Land and the river Euphrates. Before the Throne on the first day pass the ancient Egyptians. On the second day the Lord Himself visits the Assyrians, who are encamped around the ruins of Babylon. On the third day an embassy of Persians comes to salute Him at His Palace, who march with Him to the summit of the ancient Niphates.

The persons in this book are supposed to move independently of the limits of time and space.

GOD who, when earth and all the starry
heavens
Floated, as yet a fiery haze, through space
Boundless, untenanted by aught save Thee,—
By the mere might and mastery of Thy Will
Didst weld and fashion the loose vagrant sparks
Into fixed orbs, and paint the pathless void
With rich entablature of star, moon, sun ;
And marshalling Thy multitudinous host,
Each round his central fire, gavest to each
His measured orbit, and majestic march

10

Of order rhythmical ; then choosing one
Out of Thy myriad spheres, and peopling it
With living creature, bird, and beast, and flower,
Didst place thereon, in fulness of the days,
Man Thy vicegerent, dowered with will and mind
Like, but not equal to Thine own, to rule
With Thy authority o'er sea and land :—
King of the ages, Lord of space and time,
Lift, if such prayer be lawful, the close shroud
Which from our vision hides Thy vast design ; 20
Lay bare the meshes of Thy woof, and show
The dark beneficent Counsel, handed on
From age to age, from race to race, now seen
Clearly, now warped by meaner schemes of man,
But,—like some mighty river, born far off
Amid the frozen solitude of the hills,
Which, swell'n by many a tributary brook,
And genial rains of heaven, now, waxen strong,
Rolls its huge volume into the ocean stream,—
Doomed to prevail and conquer, till at length 30
O'er man's consenting spirit It reign supreme.

For Thou wert not, as some have idly deemed,
God of the Hebrews only, nor are hymns
Thy sole delight : a warrior Spirit Thou,
His cause espousing, who upholds the right :
Thou to the judge art conscience, Thou the Muse
Lifting on wings of fire the poet's song,

Lighting the painter's canvas, whispering
To the rapt minstrel dreams of love and heaven.
The prince's majesty, the sage's thought, 40
The builder's skill and patience are from Thee,—
Rays of the Súpreme Glory, which inform
With partial beam diffused this world of man,
But meet converging in the Mind of Christ.
Therefore Thy Name of Names I here invoke,
God of the nations, Wonderful, Most Great,
And bring the firstfruits of my song to Thee.

ME THOUGHT the day had dawned, for
which the world
Had watched and waited twice nine hundred
years,
And He, who once upon the painful cross, 50
Clothed in the flesh of a weak mortal man,
Had borne our sins and sorrows, stood on earth
As Judge and Conqueror. His countenance
Was radiant, as of one, who after toil
And travail sore descries at length the end
Of a long quest; and from His forehead streamed
The triple rays of Godhead. At His side¹,
Starlike around the sun, three angels stood,
Uriel, the love and holiness of God²;
Michael, His strength and courage; Raphael, 60
The depth of His unfathomable Mind.

He stood before a throne of adamant
Mingled with sapphire, and a purple cloak
Hung from His shoulders to His sandalled feet.
Not half so fair, by Grecian minstrel sung,
With wealth of golden hair and sunny brow,
High in his chariot, from his cloudy bed
Rose young Apollo ; not such majesty³
Dwelt on the stately front of sovereign Jove.
Nor wanted there the grace and innocence 70
Of boyhood, for the Smile which lit His Face,
In Its divine and deep tranquillity,
Seemed to transfigure not Himself alone
But whosoe'er beheld It. At His feet
A countless multitude of every age
And every clime was gathered, thick as clouds,
Which float in autumn round the setting sun,
Unnumbered as the glancing waves minute,
Which in the pathway of the sun flash back
His glorious image. Each was clad in garb 80
Of his own time and country, as the flowers⁴
Of diverse form and colour manifold,
Daisy, anemone, bluebell, violet,
With their fair cousins, which in joyous May
Broider the green robe of the bounteous earth.

Long gazed upon the host beneath Him spread
The King of men and angels. These were they
Whom out of every people, tribe, and tongue

He, the Lamb slain to wash away their sin,
Had ransomed : they with eyes upon Him
fixed

90

Waited in silence for His earliest word.

As travellers in the desert, vexed with heat
And blinding sand, if sight of pine appear
Or palm-tree, rising o'er the well-known spring,
Strain eyes and hasten onward ; or as men,
Tossed by fierce tempest on the raging sea,
Welcome the beacon's distant flash, and press
With oar and sail to gain the wished-for land ;
So the regard of all that concourse huge
Was fixed in deep amaze upon the Throne, 100
And Him who sate thereon. For dwelling long
Unbodied, knowing, but not known by men
Who still beheld the cheerful light of heaven,
Blind to earth's grosser joys, their souls had
learnt

God's secret. Now with purgèd spirits and clean
They looked on Him once pierced for their
offence,

And sudden with one voice, as waves that fall
In countless unison on the ocean shore,
Or trees that in some inaccessible wood
Murmur all night beneath the rushing gale, 110
Cried, 'Ave Domine cœlorum Rex,
Plenus est mundus Tuâ Gloriâ.'

Whereat the choir of seraphs, wingless now
 But robed in purple tunic and white alb,
 Took up the cry with ‘Ave Jesu Rex,
 Mundi potens, cœlorum Domine,
 Chorus cœlestis, gens mortalium
 Orbem per universum laudat Te.’

And now the long procession, moving slow,
 Began to pass before the Throne ; for Christ 120
 Spake ; and His Voice, like a deep-tonèd bell,
 Rang to the éxtreme limits of the plain :
 ‘Adeste gentes coram Judice.’

Who first of all the innumerable throng
 Obeyed the call august ? Here Roman, Greek,
 And Hebrew, with the men of older times ;
 There English, Austrian, Turk, a later brood⁵,
 Stood ready. As at dawn of day the chief
 Of some great army, eager for the fight,
 Summons his captains round him, and ordains
 To every troop and company arrayed 131
 His several station ; so the Lord of Hosts,
 Scanning the innumerable throng, called Uriel,
 Gentlest and fairest of the sons of heaven,
 And to the seraph’s ear disclosed His will.
 He with bent knee, as loyal minister,
 Received the Master’s word, and straightway
 hied

With wingèd feet where at the marge of the plain

Clustered a group of strange and ancient men,
In vesture quaint, and manner most unlike 140
All other citizens of earth. Their limbs
Were worn with bodily toil, but none disdained
The weary labour which their lives had spent.
Fragments of stone, such as their hands had
wrought

Three thousand years agone, when Greece and
Rome

Were yet but names, and these our later realms
Mere shadows looming in the Eternal Mind,—
Bore they in hand, and somewhat grimly smiled
That works, which they had fashioned, should
outlive

The ephemeral piles of later days, by hands 150
Less patient, or by hearts less loyal reared.

Midmost appeared a car gigantic, borne⁶
On wheels of massive stone, and drawn with
cords,

Whereto were yoked a thousand willing arms.
High on the car, with face unmoved, and mien
Like the majestic Sphinx, whose visage calm,
Scarred by the storms of twenty centuries,
Still fronts the wondering traveller, sate two
kings—

The first in ample robe of green, inwrought
With mystic numbers; on his head a snood 160

Square-cut, with hanging lappets on each side ;
While the other bare a priestly mitre, crowned
With flames of gold, and round his shoulders cast
A mantle of white linen. This was he,
Who built the famous Pyramid, hugest far
And nighest eternal of all human works.
There, in his mountainous sepúlchre laid,
The greatest of the Egyptian Pharaohs slept ⁷
For ages, while the old world monarchies
Rose and were swept away, one after one, 170
By some imperious rival, and in turn
Waxed and decayed the kingdoms of the Cross.
That was the king of many-gated Thebes,
Who planned the shrine at Karnac, noblest pile ⁸
Till then achieved by man, nor all unlike
The many-pillared glories of our land,
Well-styled cathedrals, not of priest alone,
But seats of Him who is both Priest and King,—
God, the Arch-priest and Monarch of our race.
As in some savage forest, not yet marred 180
By axe or cord of feller, the great oaks,
Rearing their gnarlèd and time-splintered trunks,
Twine overhead their monstrous arms, and shade
With leafy canopy the bright green-sward ;
So in this ancient temple stood and stand
The giant pillars, row on row, beneath
The load incumbent of their massy roof.

Behind the car, in royal state attired,
Swept the long line of monarchs, who held sway
At Thebes or earlier Memphis : after them 190
Isis, Osiris, Apis, and the gods,
Hawk-eyed, with beak of falcon, hoof of bull,
Who ruled the quick, and those who judged the
dead,
Holding the fateful balance, and old Nile⁹
Crowned with the water-flowers that line his
banks,
Came thronging ; last of all a choir of boys,
Sunburnt, but fair of face, in tunics green,
Each holding high a reed-encircled cross.
Soon as they reached the throne, the surging
crowd

Ceased its tumultuous shouting, and the kings
Dismounting bowed their faces to the ground,
And cast their crowns before His feet, who was,
And is, and shall be Prince of the kings of the
earth.

Then at the Lord's command rising on knee,
Thus spake the foremost king ; 'Dread sovran
Lord,

Ourselves we bring, our children, and our gods,
To do Thee homage : in Thy sight the moon
Shines not, the stars of heaven are not pure ;
Much less can we, poor children of this earth,

Hope to appear with souls quite clean from
sin

210

Before Thy spotless presence. But accept
Our praise, All-merciful, and where we sinned
Unwitting, judge not ; where with knowledge,
save.

These feeble emblems of Thy power divine
Despise not utterly ; they are wood and stone
And at Thy Will shall crumble in the dust,
Or melt to smoke and ashes in the flame.
But spare them, Lord ; henceforward they,
as we,

Are servants of the Cross : let them remain
As ladders rude, whereby we climbed towards
Thee.

220

Only do Thou of Thine abundant grace
Into Thy fold receive us, and make heirs
Of Thy divine and everlasting realm.'
He said, and ere he ceased there rose a song
From sweet boys' voices, pleading the same
prayer

Unconscious, with a psalm of simple praise :—

' Most Highest God, Eternal King,
To Thee our hearts and voices sing,
For bright and stedfast doth remain
The splendour of Thine endless reign. 230

‘When morning fills the gladdened skies,
To Thee on hymns of praise we rise ;
When night extends her purple pall,
Low kneeling at Thy feet we fall.

‘No flower doth blow, no star doth shine,
But by Thy Will and Love divine :
The flowers of red and azure dyes
Are but the laughter of Thine eyes ;

‘The stars about the welkin sown
Are jewels in Thy glorious Throne : 240
Thou art the Eternal Source and Spring
Of every good and pleasant thing.

‘Therefore, immortal Three in One,
Indwelling Spirit, Incarnate Son,
And Father, Greatest God and Best,
Thou art our Refuge and our Rest.’

Then He, whose ears are open to the prayer
Of them who ask with faithful heart, pronounced
The irrevocable words, ‘Accipimus
Hos in cœlorum regnum, et facimus 250
Vera divinæ membra Ecclesiæ.’

The while He spake, crosses of lambent flame,
Ethereal, floated o'er the neophytes,
Lighting upon their foreheads—some less bright,
Some clear and radiant as the stars of heaven.

As one who high among the eternal snows
Standing at sunset, ere the orb of day
Hath vanished, sees the stately mountain-tops
Peak after peak, like kindled torches, glow
Incarnadined with rosy light ; so Christ 260
Beheld each brow, of peasant child and king,
Crowned with the mystic bars of sacred fire.

Beside the Throne a golden candlestick¹⁰,
Like that, which in the tabernacle of God
Stood of old times within the Holy Place,
Spread its seven branches. These are the
empires seven,

Which, each succeeding other, wove the web
Of human destiny, and brought about
God's final purpose. Three prevailed before,
Three after Christ incarnate ; in the midst 270
Is one, which Janus-like looks either way,
Subsisting through the third part of our time.
First rose the ancient monarchies of the East,
Egypt, Assyria, Persia, one great light,
Burning asunder to three tongues of flame ;
Next Greece, and Israel ; in the centre Rome ;
Then Islam, and the dual Rome-born sway
Of Pope and Emperor ; lastly England. These
Fill up the tale of the world's history :
The rest but follow in their wake, or move¹¹ 280
Blindly, with devious feet, in ways obscure.

Uriel, the angel of the covenant
Made betwixt God and man, when Christ had
spoke,
Kindled in part the nearest lamp ; whereat
Rose a loud shout from all the ransomed host,
'Who will not magnify Thy Name ? For just
And true are all Thy ways, Thou King of
Saints.

Glory, and honour, and strength, and victory
Be unto Thee for ever.'

Now the sun

Sank in the West, and rays of crimson fire 290
Illumined sky and hill and plain, lit up
Helmet, and glancing hauberk, and tall lance,
Woke ruby flashes from the diamond throne,
And mingled with the triple effluence
Of splendour, which adorned the King of Kings.
Therefore the band of seraphs, tuning each
His golden harp, in tones subdued and strong
Chanted the vesper hymn, 'O Lord our God,
Thy Name is excellent in all the world.
Not the day only, but the glorious night, 300
Arrayed in panoply of sapphire, tricked
With stars of gold and argent disc of the moon,
Thou madest, and to Thee be all the praise.
As they around their high-enthronèd queen
Keep watch all night, so let Thy servants, Lord,

Be glad for ever and rejoice in Thee.

Pacem Tuam da nobis Domine.'

The host made answer, 'Vera mundi Lux,

Tu nostras tenebras illumina.

Pacem Tuam da nobis Domine.'

310

Then gathering in their tents, or stretched at length

Under the gentle influence of the sky,

They slept or watched till morning.

But when dawn

In violet mantle touched the distant hills,

Once more to meet their Lord they stood prepared.

He, from His palace issuing, greeted them

With gracious speech: a royal robe to-day

Broidered with gold, and a rich crown wore He,

Graven in front with the Most Holy Name.

On Whom with awe and mute astonishment 320

Gazing, the many-tongued and motley throng

Waited obedient, till He showed His Will.

But He, embracing the whole multitude

With the compassion of His earnest eyes,

Mounted at length His golden car, and rode,

Like sunbeam spreading quick from field to field,

Through the vast concourse, till He stayed His course

Beside the Assyrians' camp. A swarthy folk
With clothing scant, mattock and scythe in hand,
They stood—the self-same men, who, ages past,
Had delved the fields, and reaped the corn, and
turned

331

The stream of great Euphrates from his bed
By thousand channels through their parchèd
soil¹².

Apart, on thrones hewn in the living rock,
Bearded, close-robed, with high tiara crowned¹³,
Sate speechless, like to the idols of their land,
The kings of Nineveh and Babylon.

As in the city of the dead, o'erwhelmed
By fiery current from the burning hill,
Fixed in their ashen sepulchre, the men 340
Or sate or stood, as when the sulphurous hail
Fell on them ; so entranced and motionless
Sate on their rocky thrones the Assyrian kings.

Before them knelt with rod and horoscope
Chaldean seers, who read, or thought to read
The secrets of the heavens. Far off a band
Of Eastern matrons, haggard, woebegone,
With hair dishevelled, mourned the lost estate
Of the great cities, once the world's delight :
'How art thou fall'n, O royal Babylon'¹⁴ ! 350
Thy gardens, erst the wonder of all the earth,
Thy spacious palaces, thy lofty walls,

Thy vast sky-reaching temple, and thy gods
Low in the dust are laid, to rise no more.
Only the tower, reared by the hunter king¹⁵,
Rises, dismantled, shapeless and forlorn,
A home for noisome beast and ravenous bird,
Far in the desert. Where, great Nineveh,
Where are the winged, mysterious deities¹⁶,
Half-man, half-lion, whose majestic shapes, 360
Guarding the portals of thy royal halls,
Awed the beholder? Torn by stranger hands
From the kind earth, where long they mouldering
lay,

To grace an English city. Now, behold,
Jesus, the god of Israel, is come,
To judge the world in righteousness: whose
wrath,

Like an avenging fire, will clean blot out
Us and the memories of our ancient name.'

The Lord gave ear and pitied their complaint,
And willing not that aught which once was fair
Should perish utterly, called back to life 371
The dead and ruined cities. Like a dream,
Uprose the tower-capt wall of Babylon,
Uprose the Assyrian palace with its courts,
Pillars, and porticoes, and monstrous gods;
Rose the great terraced garden, as of old,
High-poised in air; and Bel's gigantic fane,

Eight-storied, many-coloured. Seeing which,
The kings fell down before His feet, as dead, 379
Crying, 'Because Thou didst not scorn, O Lord,
The works of these the humblest of Thy sons ;
Therefore we laud for ever, and adore
Meekly with hands uplifted Thy great Name,
O Hope and Consolation of the oppressed,
O Spirit of perfect wisdom, boundless might,
Father, and Friend, and Lover of mankind !'

They ceased ; but ever louder grew the shout
Of triumph from the multitude, which watched
The slow upheaval of their ancient walls.
As, when two rival and embattled hosts 390
Meet in fierce conflict on the field of war,
Far sounds the mighty din of clashing spear,
And neighing horse, and shouting soldier, mixed
With roar of thunderous artillery ;
So one vociferous roar of loud applause
Rose from that vast assembly, when the mass
Of molten brick and crumbled masonry,
Which looms above the desert, with huge throes
Took shape, and mounted skyward, tier on tier,
To twice three hundred feet above the plain ¹⁷ ;
Outstripping Egypt's greatest Pyramid, 401
The giant tower of Strasburg, and the spire
Of fair Vienna. Last of all appeared,
Crowning by forty feet the topmost stair ¹⁸,

Bel, cast in gold, the lord of Babylon.
Straightway, as if by spark electric, ran
The cry from mouth to mouth, 'Let us dethrone
The ambitious golden toy ; and, melting him
In seven-times-heated furnace, plant instead
A cross, perpetual monument of Him, 410
Who was exalted by the Cross, to hold
Supreme dominion over earth and heaven.'
They said ; and swarming to the temple's base,
How best they could, with hands or knees or feet,
Up the steep sides pursued their toilsome way.
As pilgrims to the Eternal City, bound
By chain and weight of unatonèd sin,
Cling on with painful knees unto the steps¹⁹
Of Scala Santa, if perchance they reach
The shrine at top, and with repentant eyes 420
Gaze on the image of their dearest Lord ;
So with fierce zeal they clambered, till at length
The foremost, standing on the summit, urged
The golden monster headlong. Down the steep,
Like rock dislodged from Alpine pinnacle,
It crashed, then stretched its broken length
below.

So the day wore till evening ; but when night
Fell on the plain, they kindled a great fire ;
And, summoning what cunning hands they knew
Of smith or skilled refiner, fused the mass, 430

And shaped in fashion of a Roman cross
The molten metal. Then with solemn march,
Torches in hand, they led their Prince's car
Homeward, and as they marched, with one
accord

Sang, 'Hail, all hail to earth's Anointed King,
Who had compassion on our fall'n estate !
The ruined city heard Thee, Lord ; the walls
Of ancient Babylon heard Thy Voice, and lived ;
The mountain trembled and brought forth, the
earth

Gave up its treasure. Sing, O Nineveh, 440
And clap your hands, ye men of Babylon ;
For He hath wrought salvation, He with songs
And everlasting joy hath crowned our heads.'
So chanted they, beneath the starry heavens
Marching ; and, as they went, the torches' line
Streamed many a mile, like to the fiery hair
Of some great comet, sweeping half the sky.

But when they reached the palace-gates, the
Lord,

Ascending to a cloister, built above
The midmost porch, and stretching both arms
wide,

450
In Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Blessed them ; then bade His angels for their
need

Set bread before them, and wine to cheer their way.

They, like a mighty army, ranged themselves
In order, marshalled by their ancient kings,
Great Nimrod at their head, whom following
To their old cities they with joy returned.

Meanwhile the hour had come, when all good men

And angels render thanks to God on high 459
For life, and health, and the sweet light of day ;
And pray that He, Who guides the stars, will hold
Their souls in His safe keeping through the hours
Of sleep and darkness. Therefore, gathering all
The children of His heavenly court, the Lord
In golden-threaded tunic, snowy alb,
And cope of lustrous pearls about Him clasped,
Followed His Cherubim and Seraphim,—
These bearing censers, tapers those, whilst one
Held in his hands the crownèd Cross of Christ,—
Into the Holy Place. A house it was 470
Fretted and pinnacled from roof to base
Like Milan's marble dome, but framed throughout
Of purest alabaster. Up the nave
Seven clustered columns, wrought by loving
hands
For the dear Master's sake, in fourfold line

Reared their tall shafts and leaf-encircled heads.
Above them soared with span aërial
The curved and moulded arches. Lord of song,
How shall my weak and earth-encumbered verse
Tell out the glories of Thy inmost shrine? 480
Each seat was roofed with archèd canopy
Of ribbed and fluted silver; while the Throne,
Entire of beaten gold, a miracle
Of curious work, was, like a sunlit wood,
Beset with golden pinnacles, and crowned
With a fair cross of diamonds. Not a part
Of all the mighty edifice, but bore
A mystic meaning, and revealed in stone
Some page of man's eventful history.

The tall wide-girthèd pillars of the nave 490
For Roman emperors stood; the lesser piers
On either side, dividing aisle from aisle,
For Popes and Kaisers; round the chancel
ranged

Monarchs of England in the front, at back
The lords of Islam. Then each carved stall
Bore the high name of sculptor or of sage,
Minstrel or architect, whose soul had caught
Before his time the harmonies of heaven,
Or read the dim mysterious laws, which rule
This mighty world, and the endless mind of
man. 500

Such was the fane, towards which the angelic band

In fair procession moved. Along the nave,
Lit only by their tapers, on they swept ;
And, as they passed, each ghostly pillar seemed,
Instinct with awe and wonder, to bow head,
And make obeisance to the Lord of Life.
He at the temple's Eastern end knelt down
Before the altar, and in voice which fell
Like distant waters on the listening ear, 509
Chanted the sweet old prayers of evensong,—
Changed somewhat, as was meet,—for when He stood

After confession to absolve their sins,
Not the old form, but gladder words spake He.
'We thank Thee, Father, Lord of earth and heaven,

That it hath pleased Thee of Thy boundless grace
To pardon us our sins ; to lead us safe ^{so}
Through the dark waves of this tempestuous world,

And make us heirs for ever in the realm
Of Thy dear Son. Grant therefore that Thy Love
May burn and shine within our hearts always,
Till Thou shalt count us worthy to behold 521
Thy Godhead, and adore Thy Face.' So prayed,
Not for them only, but for all mankind,

The heavenly Intercessor, and His brow,
E'en as He prayed, grew brighter than erewhile,
And round His hair and o'er His forehead played
The Glory of the Blessed TRINITY.

But when the prayers were ended, and the hymn,

'Sol animæ, Jesu carissime
Salvator,' followed by the single voice 530
Of benediction, 'Gratia Domini,
Et Dei caritas, et Spiritus
Sancti communio vobiscum sit,'
In echoes faint along the vaulted roof
Had died away; with slow recession all
Back to their chambers wound their peaceful way,
And sleeping dreamed how newly they might work
Their Master's pleasure in the coming day.

Scarce had the first beams of the morning star
Glimmered above the horizon, when the blare
Of trumpets, and the hum of men was heard 541
Without the palace. Rising at which sound,
The archangel Michael, clad in complete steel,
Rode to the gate forthwith, and bade declare
Their errand. He who, lordliest and first,
Seemed leader of the warlike company,
Made answer bold, 'The lords of the ancient
world ²¹,—

Who led the Assyrians captive, and subdued
The land of Egypt ; who in later days
Strove with the Roman emperors, and alone 550
Of all the nations of the East escaped
Their iron sway ; whose princes even now
Bow not the knee to Caliph nor to King ;—
We Persians, children of the sun, are come
To render homage to the Lord of Hosts
Your Master.' He who spake, a mighty man,
Having a crown with many spikes of gold ²²
Set ray-wise like the sun, with hair and beard
Of darkest red, and flowing robes of silk 559
Adorned with gems of price,—was Cyrus, first
And greatest of the Persian kings, who smote
The might of Babylon, and reigned supreme
Among the kings of the earth. Beside him
stood,
Hooded and cloaked in gown of russet black,
Old Zoroaster, of the Persian race
Prophet and sage, who shouted with loud voice,
'Now is the end of all things, and the doom
By me foreshadowed in dim ages past.
For since the birth of man Evil and Good ²³
Have met in conflict ; till the source of ill, 570
Ever receding, should at length become,
Quenched and absorbed by stronger Power
benign,

Exterminate and void. Hail Spirit of Good,
Christ, Whose prevailing Virtue hath expelled
Grim shades of Death and Hell, to throne again
Fair Righteousness and bright-haired Peace and
Love !'

As when the leader of some valiant host,
Now sure of victory, lifts voice amain,
And with new terror strikes the trembling foe ;
Or as a lion, whom the inferior herd—

580

Panther and jackal and hyæna fierce—
Distant admire, beside some river's brink
Roars mightily, so that the woods resound ;
So shouted Zoroaster, till the walls
Of the high palace echoed with his cry.

Which when the Master heard, He straightway
took

His Shield, which is the Righteousness of Saints,
His Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword,
Which is Jehovah's Strength ; and came with
speed

Into their midst, saying, 'Who and what
are ye,

590

That, ere heaven's lantern hath inflamed the sky,
Affright the slumbering day ?' Thereat three
men

Of reverend mild aspéct, with long white hair,
And clad in royal robes, bent knee and spake :

'Sweet King of heaven, once a mortal child,
 We, of Thy gracious infancy the first
 Adorers, with new praise salute Thee God.
 As on our gifts and worship Thou didst smile
 In the rude inn at Bethlehem ; so now, 599
 Throned and exalted o'er the highest heaven,
 Take Thou our gold and frankincense ; of myrrh
 Having no farther need ; since Death for Thee
 Is dead ; and Life, divine, unquenchable,
 Dwells in the clear effulgence of Thy Brow.'
 He heard, and bade them with right loving voice
 Be of good cheer, for that their deeds of faith
 Should bear good fruit and treasure hundredfold ;
 Then with these words addressed the warlike
 throng :

'Medes, Persians, Parthians, stalwart mountain-
 eers,
 Who, not in temples wrought with mortal hands,
 But 'neath the vast pavilion of the sky²⁴ 611
 Knelt to a Power unseen, to you the last :
 Mid the old nations of the Rising Sun,
 Did God,—what time the Egyptian lamp waxed
 dull,
 And Asshur's strength was drowned in luxury,—
 Entrust the staff of empire. Not to ye
 'Twas given to frame immortal monuments,
 Build monstrous walls, nor to besiege the heavens

With mountains of up-pilèd masonry.
Yet somewhat of the fiercer Roman spirit 620
Burnt in your souls, in that ye loved three
things²⁵,
War, and the chase, and bold outspoken truth.
Therefore in you, ere dawned the Athenian star,
Three realms of Orient were awhile made one :
Nor bowed alone the pride of Babylon,
But ancient Memphis, and the gates of Thebes
Before the terror of your conquering arms.
'But say not thou, O prophet, that from God
Is evil ; for so teaching thou dost wrong
Unto the súpreme heavenly Majesty, 630
In whom no darkness dwells, nor dwelt, at all.
Nay, but the craft of spirits rebellious
Adverse to God, and pride in the human breast
Raging, and famine of ill-curbed desire
Wrought evil ; whilst the All-patient Heart of
God
Strove ever, worked, incited towards the Good.'
To whom the seer, 'Be not extreme, O King,
To mark Thy servant's ignorance ; but purge
What in his word was false ; what low, exalt.
For this same faith was to my hapless race, 640
As to lost travellers the star of morn,
Amid the dark and savage wilderness
Casting a faint light on their souls' dismay.

Now us and our weak doctrine hast Thou quite
 Won to Thyself, and melted in the beams
 Of Thy pure truth and matchless clemency.
 Thrice hail! we own henceforth no lord but
 Thee.'

To him thus speaking all the assembled host
 Murmured applause ; as when the sable fowl,
 Who haunt the tree-tops of the forest green, 650
 Call each to other, filling the warm air
 With their uncouth, monotonous refrain.

Outspake at length Darius, the Great King :
 'Sith temples have we none, nor images
 Wrought in fine gold, nor priestly garments fair,
 Wherewith to honour and extol Thy Name ;
 March we, beneath the canopy of heaven,
 To the white summit of some ancient hill ;
 And there in concert, while the bright-robed
 Sun,

Best symbol of the Godhead, unobscured 660
 By exhalations of this baser earth,
 Rides in full splendour,—sing we a new song,
 Offering the firstfruits of our life renewed
 To Thee our souls' high Judge and Saviour.'

He said ; and all, by heavenly aid impelled,
 At once moved swiftly towards the distant hills,
 Joyfully singing on their way. Not yet
 Had he, whose deity they once implored,

Shown in the firmament his radiant head.
But waves of purple light, in the far East, 670
Mingled with silver of the fading moon,
Dyed all the dim horizon, and lit up
The crystal horns, and fields of virgin snow.
Anon, by fair gradation, the dark flush
Grew rosier, till at length leapt into sight
The lustrous orb, o'erflowing earth and sky
With sudden torrent of diffusèd gold.
Whereat the people halted, and hushed voice,
Awestruck; as when sometimes, mid whirl of
leaves,
And clatter of the tempest, the loud winds 680
Cease, and the harmless thunder, far removed,
With cadence of low murmur dies away.
Then the whole multitude, with one outburst
Of chorick song, saluted, kneeling low,
God, and the sun, His glorious minister.

‘ Hail mighty monarch of the sky,
Emblem of God’s eternity,
Within whose flame-girt citadel
The powers of light concentrated dwell !

‘ Lamp of the world, when thou dost show
Thy royal face, in heaven aglow, 691
The vassal moon obscures her ray,
The gentle starlight melts away.

'But as the stars to thee, so thou
Unto the Sun of suns must bow,
Hiding with shame thy paler face
Before His excellence and grace.

'Come then, transforming Light of Light,
And flash upon our darkened sight,
Celestial Ardour, Flame divine, 700
Quicken our hearts, and make them Thine.'

Now at the base of the snow-mantled heights,
Whence Tigris draws his fertilizing flood,
The Persian host stood, wondering : such speed
Souls, who have crossed the bars of Paradise,
Enjoy, the will fulfilling of heaven's King.
First they adored the silent citadels,
Which were of old their hearth and altar-stone.
Then upward through the dark and thick-set
 pines,
Which clothed the rugged uplands, o'er great
 streams 710
Of cloven ice, and crags precipitous
They clomb untiring, till they gained the tracts,
Veiled by a curtain of perpetual snow.
Here leaving those, whose worn or tender limbs
Brooked not the steep ascent ; the rest prepared,
With feet well shod, loins girt, and muscles knit,
To scale the bulwarks of the topmost horn.

Nor He who oft, while in man's flesh disguised,
On the bleak mountain, through the lonesome
night,

Held high communion with the Eternal Sire, 720
Disdained, a King, to lead the loyal host,
A God, to guide His faithful worshippers.

But when they reached the top stair of the
mount,

And the great hills, in their primeval strength,
Lay round them, sky-aspiring, venerable,
Bathed in the fresh beatitude of morn ;
Then all the pent-up worship of their hearts
Welled out in melody of prayerful song.
On the white floor, bareheaded, hands outspread,
They knelt, a goodly cirque of forms august, 730
Lords, princes, satraps, councillors, and kings,
The flower of the ancient realm. Say Muse, who
first,

Who last, of all the congregated Medes,
On the high, rock-bound pinnacle set foot ?
Xerxes the first, who smote the Hellespont,
And cleft Mount Athos, eager to redeem
The long disgrace of his inglorious life,
Bestrode the summit ; after him the prince,
Whose crown and realm were humbled in the
dust

By the great conqueror of Macedon.

740

Last Zoroaster dragged his aged limbs
Up the steep slippery rocks, and while he knelt
Before the Master, 'Now at length,' quoth he,
'Dark visions of a rival Ahriman
Seem wholly fled ; and I behold, revealed
Here in this unroofed temple of His own,
The God of gods, All-gracious and All-wise,
At Whose bright Presence every evil thing
Flies off abashed, as clouds before the sun.'

Then in glad chorus to the Spirit of Good, 750
Almighty, Everlasting ; Who, as fire,
Pervades the realm of Nature ; feeds the stars ;
Gives counsel to the soul of man, and life
To every creature,—they their hymn addressed
In solemn diapason. Far below
The assembled people heard the song, and joined
Their alleluias. Then they all made speed,
Ere fell the mists of evening, to descend
The frosty heights, and win the safer plain. 759
And the great sun sank, ending the third day.

NOTES TO BOOK I.

1 Line 57. *The triple rays of Godhead.* Titian generally represents our Lord, not crowned with a circle of light, as do the earlier painters, but with three rays (perhaps emblematic of the Trinity) springing from the top, and either side of His head. This is notably the case in the great Dresden picture of the 'Tribute-money,' where the threefold radiance gives a mysterious solemnity to the splendid Face. Again, in the well-known picture of Raffaelle, commonly called 'La Chaise,' while the Virgin and St. John are crowned with the usual aureole, the infant Christ is distinguished by three tongues of flame.

2 l. 59. Uriel is the angel introduced by Milton, *Par. Lost*, III. 654 :—

' Uriel, for thou of those seven Spirits that stand
In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
The first art wont His great authentic will
Interpreter through highest heaven to bring.'

He is also described, l. 690, as 'Regent of the Sun,' and 'the sharpest-sighted spirit of all in heaven', but as unable to see through the hypocrisy of Satan.

In the description of the three angels I have followed tradition and my own fancy, rather than the strict etymology of the names.

3 l. 68. *Rose young Apollo.* This may seem inconsistent with the prophetic description of our Lord, 'He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him,' but universal tradition ascribes to Him a countenance of unusual beauty.

- 4 l. 81. *As the flowers.* The succession of similes in this and the following paragraph was suggested, partly by the series which occurs in Dante's *Paradiso*, Can. XIV., where the poet, entering the planet Mars, beholds the beatified spirits of the Christian martyrs; partly by the long list introduced by Homer in Iliad II., before he begins the catalogue of nations present at Troy.
- 5 l. 127. *English, Austrian, Turk.* I have chosen these as specimens of the different nations, because the later books are mainly concerned with their history : Book VII. with Islam, IX. and X. with the Holy Roman Empire, XI. and XII. with England.
- 6 l. 152. *A car gigantic.* The picture of the Sphinx being drawn to its destination by ancient Egyptians, exhibited some years ago by Mr. Goodall, inspired these lines.
- 7 l. 168. *The greatest of the Egyptian Pharaohs.* I have called King Cheops the greatest, because his work has endured the longest, but Rameses the Great is generally considered more deserving of that title.
- 8 l. 174. *The shrine at Karnac.* The so-called Hypostyle Hall at Karnac is about 340 feet by 170 in extent, and has 134 columns, disposed in 9 parallel rows one way, and 16 the other, the smaller pillars being nearly 9 feet in diameter, the larger almost 12. See *Penny Cyclopædia*, article 'Egypt'; also Ferguson's *History of Architecture*, vol. i. Mr. Ferguson regards this famous hall as superior in many respects to the finest of the Gothic cathedrals.
- 9 l. 194. *Holding the fateful balance.* Osiris is represented in the ancient Egyptian wall-pictures seated on a throne, surrounded by the gods his assessors, and judging the dead, whose hearts are weighed in a balance before him. *Old Nile*, suggested by the famous statue, in the Vatican Museum, of the Nile and his sixteen sources ; who is represented as an old man, with infants clambering round his legs and shoulders.

- 10 l. 263. *A golden candlestick.* The shape of the candlestick, which stood in the Jewish tabernacle, is familiar to most readers. The trunk, which carries one light, has three branches springing from it on either side, one placed below the other.
- 11 l. 280. *The rest but follow in their wake.* It may startle some people to find no mention of such nations as the French, Spanish, and Dutch. I may therefore as well say beforehand that the Holy Roman Empire is taken as a centre, round which the remaining European kingdoms are grouped.
- 12 l. 333. *By thousand channels.* The country round Babylon was intersected in ancient times by a prodigious number of canals, by means of which the soil was rendered extremely fruitful, so that the seed produced 200 or 300 fold, and blades of wheat and barley grew to 4 fingers in breadth. See Herodotus I. 193.
- 13 l. 335. *Bearded, close-robed, &c.* The Assyrian kings are represented in the ancient wall-sculptures with beards, wearing close embroidered robes and a high mitra or tiara; while behind them generally stand two beardless eunuchs. See the engravings and descriptions in Layard's *Nineveh*.
- 14 l. 350. *Royal Babylon.* The reader may perhaps be glad to be reminded, that the walls of ancient Babylon were 300 feet in height, and 60 miles in length. The so-called hanging gardens were raised on thick piers of brick, the floor laid on the piers being covered with stone, on which the earth was laid. In the hollow of the piers filled with earth the largest trees grew. The object of these gardens seems to have been to give the king a prospect over the lofty walls. See *P. C.*
- 15 l. 355. *Only the tower.* The hill, or mass of decayed masonry, which goes by the name of Birs Nimroud, rises at its western side to 198 feet, above which is a solid pile of brick 37 feet high. This hill has generally been identified

with the ancient temple of Bel, described by Herodotus (I. 171). See *P. C.* and Turner's Notes on Herodotus.

16 l. 359. *The winged, mysterious deities.* Of these human-headed lions Sir H. Layard (*Nineveh*, Chap. III.) thus speaks : 'What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conception of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity of the Supreme Being? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of the man, of strength than the body of the lion, of ubiquity than the wings of the bird.'

17 l. 400. *Twice three hundred feet.* Herodotus tells us nothing about the height of this tower, only saying that it was a furlong in length and in breadth ; but Strabo declares it to have been a furlong in height also. Herodotus' description is as follows : ' In the middle of the temple a solid tower was built, and on this rose another tower, and yet another upon this, up to the number of eight towers, and in the last tower there is a large shrine,' &c. The Great Pyramid is 450 ft. high, the spire of Strasburg 500 ft., that of Vienna 440.

18 l. 404. *Crowning by forty feet.* The great statue of gold, kept in the shrine, which Herodotus was apparently not allowed to see, was 12 cubits (18 ft.) high, but there was another mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, of 40 ft., which I have supposed to crown the great tower.

19 l. 418. *Cling on with painful knees.* The Scala Santa, or sacred staircase, at Rome is composed of stones said to have been trodden by our Lord on His way from the Prætorium. No pilgrim is allowed to touch them with his feet, but each must raise himself by his knees from step to step.

20 l. 516. *To pardon us our sins.* Our Lord here speaks on behalf of mankind, not as Himself sinning, but as 'bearing the sin of many, and making intercession for the transgressors.'

- 21 l. 547-553. *The lords of the ancient world, &c.* The Persians, from Cyrus' reign to the present day, have enjoyed a singular immunity from foreign rule. Subdued by Alexander, they shortly, however, regained independence under the Parthian Arsacidæ, whose arms defied the majesty of Rome till the year A.D. 198, when Ctesiphon, the capital, was taken and sacked by the Emperor Septimius Severus. But the Romans were unable to retain the prize which they acquired, and in the succeeding period, graphically described in the pages of Gibbon, Persia, under her native dynasty of the Sassanidæ, rose again to a high pitch of power and prosperity, at times equalling, at times even surpassing the Eastern Roman Empire. Islam, however, accomplished the task, in which Greece and Rome had failed; and in the seventh century the religion of the Prophet supplanted that of Zoroaster. It was not till A.D. 1502 that the country, successively occupied by the Caliphs, the Seljukian Turks, and, later on, by Genghis Khan and the Moguls, at last re-asserted her independence under Ismail Shah, founder of the Sophi dynasty. But from that time she has remained independent alike of the Ottoman Sultans, the English Kings, and the Russian Czars, though surrounded by the dominions of these powerful neighbours.
- 22 l. 557. *A crown with many spikes of gold.* The Persian kings in old times wore a peculiar kind of erect tiara, called cidaris, crowned along the top ridge with tongues, as of flame. That of Darius was blue and white. See engraving in Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities* and Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. p. 320, note.
- 23 l. 569. *Evil and Good have met in conflict.* According to the old Zoroastrian system the government of the world was divided between two powers, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the good and evil principle. The reader may perhaps remember that Scott in the 'Talisman' puts into the mouth of Saladin the Sultan a hymn to Ahriman, the spirit of evil.

24 l. 611. '*neath the vast pavilion of the sky.*' The ancient Persians, followed to some extent by the modern sect of Parsees, used neither images, nor altars, nor even temples in their religion, but sacrificed on the top of mountains to the sun and moon, and the earth, and fire, and water, and the winds. See Herodotus I. 131. Fire, however, and the sun seem to have been the principal objects of their worship.

25 l. 621. *In that ye loved three things.* Herodotus (I. 139) tells us that the Persian youth, from 5 to 20 years of age, were taught three things only : to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth.

I append, for the benefit of my general readers, a translation of the Latin sentences :—

1. 111. Hail Lord, King of the heavens ! earth is full of Thy Glory.
1. 115. Hail Jesu King, Master of the universe, Lord of the heavens ! The heavenly choir and the race of mortals throughout all the world praise Thee.
1. 123. Appear ye nations before your Judge.
1. 249. We receive these men into the kingdom of heaven, and make them true members of Our Divine Church.
1. 307. Grant us Thy Peace, O Lord.
1. 308. True Light of the world, lighten our darkness.
1. 529. Sun of the soul, Jesu, dearest Saviour.
1. 531. The grace of the Lord, and the Love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

BOOK II.

Greece. 3.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord summons the ancient Greeks, and travels with Alexander and his army through Asia Minor to Troy, thence by sea with an Athenian fleet to the island of Chios, where He finds the poet Homer.

SOON as the rosy-fingered morn appeared,
Touching the grey clouds, and the purple
sky

With lines of crimson fire ; uprose the Lord,
And, gathering all His host angelical,
Bade them prepare to journey many days
To a far country ; for His purpose was
Across the Ionian continent to fare
Right towards the Setting Sun ; and taking ship
Where the blue stream of rapid Bosphorus
Parts Asia from the West, to sail along 10
The waters of the broad Ægean main
To Athens. Every Greek was therefore bound,
Armed with the brazen breastplate, as of yore,
Long lance and polished shield, to attend his
King

In ordered phalanx ; or to go before,
And, manning goodly force of ancient ship,—
Trireme, and bireme, such as fought of old
Upon the glorious day of Salamis,—
Bear Him in triumph to the city's port.

First of the seraphs bright-eyed Raphael¹ 20
Answered the call; who with a falcon's speed
Glanced through the multitude, now here, now
there

Lighting quick eye, if he should chance discern
The archèd helm of any child of Greece².

At last a youth, right kingly to behold,
Dark-eyed, dark-haired, with lithe, well-shapen
arms.

And carvèd lip, curled somewhat, as in scorn,
Athwart his path came running: on his brow
A victor's wreath of laurel-leaves wore he,
And all his harness gleamed with inwrought
gold.

The seraph, quick divining, knew the king,
Great Alexander, whose victorious arms³,
Scattering, as chaff, the unwarlike myriads
Of Asia, planted in the distant East
The arts and tongue of Hellas. He, with head
In reverence duly bent, made lowly speech
Unto the golden minister of heaven :

'O thou, in whose bright eye and starry front

Dwells all the wisdom, and prophetic fire
Of Phœbus, and the maids of Helicon ; 40
Dear guardian-angel of our quick-souled race,
Raphael ! behold the man whom thou dost seek.
For I, through forty terms of human life
Flitting, a shade, in the dark realms of Dis^a ;
Now by our common Master with new strength
Armed, and endued with immortality,—
I, even I, am he, before whose sword
Stricken, as grass beneath the mower's scythe,
Bowed all the might of Eastern chivalry :
Who, as the shaft of Zeus, from land to land 50
Darted, tempestuous, irresistible ;
And from the motley tribes of Mede, Chaldee,
Phœnician, swart Egyptian, distant Ind,
Carved me a new, imperial realm of Greece.
Say, therefore, to thy King, that I, His liege,—
A suppliant, once a prince and conqueror,—
Stand ready-armed, with my victorious Greeks,
Who fought at Issus, and Granicus' stream,
And at Arbela from the vanquished Mede
Wrested the crown of Asia,—to go forth 60
Under His royal leadership, and march,
Vassals of God, to conquer a new world.'

To whom the smiling seraph, nowise wroth,
Answered, ' Thy zeal, if not thy high designs,

^a Pluto.

Win thee sure favour with the All-gracious King.

But come thyself, brave soldier, and present Thy service.' So they twain together fared, The dark-haired Hellen, and the Childe of Heaven,

Like hyacinth and primrose, which in spring 69 Paint the gay woodland, blooming side by side.

Eftsoons they reached the portals of that House,

Whereof our Christ is Abbot and is King * : And much the Greek, whose unaccustomed eyes Tasted the deep delight of Gothic art, Marvelled. For round the sides a cloister fair, Like that which borders many an English fane, Ran, many-arched ; each shaft was built entire Of rosy-veined marble, and the whole Fretted and moulded like a poet's dream.

Eastward, the minster's tapering pinnacles 80 Clove the blue sky ; while Northward, wrought in stone,

With overhanging cornice, richly carved, And massive porch, deep-vaulted, rose to view The high wall of the stately palace-front. O'er palace, shrine, and square the royal boy Cast his admiring eye, nor knew at first Standing before his King : but suddenly

His glance encountered the dear look divine
Of Whom he sought ; whereat he ran straightway
To greet Him, and fell down before His feet, 90
Crying, ‘The king of Greeks, and lord of men
To God Incarnate bows the patient knee ;
Earth’s bravest soldier greets Heaven’s sovran
King.

With what huge joy, and bliss unspeakable
Do I regard Thy Face ; wherein are blent
The fire, the majesty, the mystery
Of genial Greek, proud Roman, and rapt Jew ;
Nay, the perfection of all human powers,—
Mind, heart, soul, spirit,—exalted and refined
Into the splendid faultlessness of God. 100
Now therefore summon Thou mine ancient host,
Lord of all strength and beauty ; braver none
Ever bare lance, drew sword, or pointed shaft ;
And let the warlike arms, which yoked mankind
To Alexander’s chariot, once again
Bring the world captive to the feet of Christ.’

As thus with eye that flashed between his
tears,

And eager voice, high raised, he urged his suit,
The Lord beheld and loved him ; nor disdained
That one, not yet engrafted in His Church, 110
Should be His minister, but gently spake,
‘O rightly named the Great, dear, ardent soul,

Bravest of soldiers, manliest of men,
 Thee and thy valiant Hellenes with this word
 I take, enfranchise, and incorporate
 Into God's city and My realm of grace.
 Thine ancient gods, Apollon, Ares, Zeus,
 As phantoms of a dream are vanished :
 Thy God, thy King, thy Friend henceforth
 am I.'

119

Uriel, who knew his Lord's unspoken will,
 Hearing these words, hied swiftly with glad feet
 Unto the sacred chamber ; and brought out
 The fair white alb, with cope of rich brocade ;
 The cloven mitre too, with jewels seven
 Bordered, in token of the sevenfold gift
 Of God's Almighty Spirit ; and clad forthwith
 In robes pontifical the world's High-Priest.
 Then, standing in the vestibule, girt round
 With all the white-robed company of heaven,
 The Lord took water, and did thrice therewith
 Sprinkle His royal proselyte, and marked 131
 The Cross of man's redemption on his brow.
 When from His lips the words of blessing fell,
 'Quod te non puduit confiteri me,
 Signo te signo Crucis, In Nomine
 Ter Sanctæ Trinitatis,' the whole air
 Seemed vocal with the joyous minstrelsy
 Of angels, lengthening out the loud 'Amen'.

And all that day, till shades of night returned,
The blessed ministers of peace went round, 140
Gathering new sheep into the fold of Christ.

Ere brake the ensuing dawn, behold the plain
Bristled with columns of well-armèd men,—
Greek soldiers, fresh enlisted and insworn
Under the Lord of Hosts ; and bearing each,
As sign and symbol of the cause he served,
An azure cross, on his left shoulder bound.
Right through the ranks their chosen General
Rode, and with cheering words bespeak them
fair.

They, like some fortress of the middle age, 150
Thick-set, from battlement and lattice high,
With out-thrust lances ; ranged in dense array
The threatening front of their embattled
squares⁶.

To whom, with lifted voice, and arm out-stretched,

Advancing to the midst, thus spake the Lord :

‘ Soldiers of Greece, who meet in arms to-day
After long exile, burning for new fields
Of fame to win, new worlds to make your own,
New hearts to impregnate with your Grecian
fire :

I know your virtue, and your courage tried. 160
But now to other might than mortal arms

Your new-born spirits shall hearken, and confess
The just dominion of the Prince of Peace.
Behold the heavens, with planets and bright stars
Thick interwoven ; see yon galaxy,—
A golden mist, wherein each faintest point
Hath light and splendour equal to your sun :
Look on yourselves, who but two nights agone
Floated mid earth and heaven, invisible,
The voiceless echoes of your ancient names :—
Then ask, if He, Whose Will Omnipotent 171
Planted the starry legions, and now calls
Back to their tenements your fleeting souls,
Hath arm so short, wields counsel so infirm,
To quail before this earth's inhabitants ?
Or needs the succour of weak mortal hand,
To make all hearts bow in subjection
Unto His fixed inevitable reign ?
But if 'tis fame and honour that ye seek,
Hellenes, of fame ye truly have full meed, 180
In that ye march, the chosen band of Him,
Whose sole command the firmament of heaven,
The round world, and each living soul therein
Obeys.'

They heard submissive, and their prince
Bare of his leafy circlet, prayed this prayer :
'Great King of men, but likewise and not least,

King of our Greece, and all true Grecian hearts :
This wreath of laurel-leaves, the glorious badge
Of conquering athlete, which in after times
Sate on the Cæsars' brow majestical, 190
Deign Thou to wear for Alexander's sake.'
Therefore the Lord, chief of Hellenic host,
Put on the garb of Hellas,—a blue cloak,
Bound at one shoulder with a clasp of gold,
And wreath of twinèd bay about His brow.
Then quickly (for the sun rode high in heaven)
The host,—of mortal armies crowned perchance
With the most richest palms of victory,—
Made ready for the march. The concourse
vast

Of nations, compassing the sapphire Throne,
Watched them depart, and wished the men
good speed. 201

Chiefly the Egyptians hailed with glad acclaim
The parting troop, and thronging, as they passed,
This way and that way, made a living lane,
Through which the Greeks, exulting, held their
course.

For Egypt was the kindly nurse ⁷, whence sprung
The wondrous arts of her precocious child.
Wherefore the swarthy people of the Nile
Welcomed their foster-children; and with
shawm,

Tabret, and cymbal made a merry noise, 210
To speed the new crusaders on their way.

Tell me, thou warlike seraph, Michael,
Knight of the Most High God, whose arms
availed

Against the strength and fierce envenomed wiles
Of the fell grisly dragon, our Arch-foe ;—

Tell me, what captains, and what warriors bold
Marched with the valiant prince of Macedon.

First Clitus, fondly loved, and foully slain⁸ :
Next were the chiefs, who, while their lord yet
lived⁹,

Followed his guiding star ; and, when he died,
Parted and ruled the royal heritage :

Then divers, born in late, or earlier times,—

Philip, of noble son the crafty sire ;
Pyrrhus, the red Epirot king, who first
With the stout Roman matched the fiery Greek ;
And the two Theban heroes, by whose might¹⁰
Thebes for a while became the crown of things :
With those right gallant youths, bound, each to
each,

By mutual love into one Sacred Band,
Who erst, on Chæronea's fatal field, 230
For freedom nobly fought, and nobly fell.
These led the van, while in the safer rear,
Clothed in rich purple mantles, rode a troop

Of Emperors, part Roman, and part Greek,
Who through a hundred decades of our time
Or reigned, or seemed to reign (such shadowy
power

Mocked their proud titles and imperial state,)
In the luxurious halls of Eastern Rome.
For, vanquished in the field of war, and
driven

From her high place by stronger Italy, 240
Greece was not all undone, nor yielded up
Her whole soul to her haughty conqueror ;
But in the rival arts of peace won back
What she had lost in war's arbitrament.

Nor did the work of the great Grecian king
Perish, his realm dismantled and o'erthrown ;
But grew within, and did at length supplant
The ruder Roman domination.

Therefore when He, the Monarch of all souls,
Our own Divine, Immortal Emperor, 250
Founded His kingdom ; through the Grecian
tongue

His sovran edicts were made known to men.
Nay, too, the imperial hearth and citadel ¹¹,
And all the vassal realms of Orient,
Roman in name alone, waxed Greek in deed ;
And a Greek ruler filled the Cæsars' throne
A thousand years beside the Bosphorus.

Full many a day o'er mountain and through
vale

They journeyed, and beguiled their pilgrimage
With song ; now chanting how in days of old
The might and chivalry of ancient Greece 261
Met to do battle at the gates of Troy ;
How Hector's glancing helmet spread dismay
In the Argive ranks ; then how, when Jove in-
clined

His doubtful scales of fate, the hero fell,
Smit by the falchion of his vengeful foe.

Full many a night beneath the unclouded sky,
Blazing with myriad stars, they lay encamped :
And ever as the sun rose, and what time
In pomp of crimson or of orange cloud 270
He bade the world farewell, from every tongue
Sounded high anthem to the Lord of Heaven,
By Whom the worlds were made ; Whose saving
Blood

Redeems mankind ; Whose cleansing Spirit
grants

Pardon and peace to every faithful soul.

And now they neared the glorious battle-
ground,

Whereon the gods, if Homer's song be true,
Waged war with mortal men ; and cries of
'Troy'

Rose, and were wafted quick from lip to lip. 279
Which sight beholding, the brave Grecian king
Restrainèd not salt tears, but mourned aloud,
'Land of the famous dead, O fairest plain,
Rich with the blood of heroes ! would some god
Bring back the bright days of thine ancient
fame,

When Troy's high citadel above thee rose ;
When brazen spear, high helm, and yokèd car
Flashed in thy midst ; and ships in hundreds lay
Drawn up beside the rushing Hellespont !'

As thus he spake lamenting, he was ware
Of a low murmur, like the sullen roar 290
Swelling sometimes from distant thundercloud
At dead of night : and as he wondering gazed,
The grey horizon seemed to take new shape,
And from the purple mist, as with the wand
Of an enchanter, towers and lofty walls
Gleamed in the splendour of the midday sun.

At once a festal, joyous multitude
Of boys with flowers engarlanded, and men
Who bare huge store of many-coloured fruit,—
Citron, and orange, and pomegranate,—streamed
Forth from the gates. A reverend, grave old

man 301

Rode foremost, and beside his aged sire
A hero with bright casque and dancing plume

Guided the royal car. To whom advanced,
 Rising innumEROUS from the charmèd plain,
 A kindred host, harnessed in brazen mail,
 Arched helmet, iron sword and ashen spear.
 A sceptred chief, well-armed, rode at their head,
 Whose brow, though bold and chivalrous, yet
 lacked

That look of calm, inborn authority, 310

Which marks a temper of heroic mould.

This was the king of Argos^b, first in rank
 Of all the chiefs who fought at Ilium.

Beside him marched a grizzled veteran,
 Much scarred and buffeted by war on land,
 And storm upon the inhospitable main,
 Ulysses; followed by the faithful hound¹²,
 Who knew—more mindful he than spouse or
 son—

His lord, returning after twenty years

In guise of beggar to his fathers' halls. 320

Last of the line, with downcast visage, came
 The ignoble conqueror, who deigned to wreak
 Unworthy vengeance on his fallen foe^c.

Now mid the ranks of the great Argive host
 Priam, the white-haired king, by Hector led,
 Made his slow way; while after them the boy,—
 The little grandson, young Astyanax,—

^b. Agamemnon.

^c. Achilles.

Ran with unequal steps, eager to greet¹³
The radiant Face, exceeding loveable,
Of Him, who is the Very Source of love. 330
Nor the mute worship of his untaught heart
Did the sweet Lord despise ; but took the child
Into His arms, and signed his infant brow
With the dear mark which makes us heirs of
Heaven.

Then Hector, ‘Lord, Thy bounty hath restored
All that we hoped, and more than we deserved.
Much sinning, much forgiven, we render Thee
Our meek devotion.’ Said his hoary sire,
‘Behold, we bring Thee flowers, and mellow
fruit :

Our Troy had good report in days of old 340
For plenty and largess ; but never guest
So mighty, or so high-renowned, as Thou,
Trode in the circle of her ancient towers.’

To whom the Lord made answer : ‘Hail true
hearts,

And valiant arms, known where the song is
known

Sounding from Homer’s lyre the wide world
through !

This day the frost and winter of your souls
Is turned to spring, and all your nighted woes
Break into daylight and the voice of song :

This day the long sleep of three thousand
years

350

Is changed for life and immortality.'

As thus He spake, the Achaian warriors,

Their bright arms flashing in the blaze of
noon,

Drew near; and Agamemnon, bending low,

Spake wingèd words: 'Of old, when time was
young,

The foremost soldiers of the world were we.

Who urged his fiery horses o'er the plain

Like great Achilles? Who like Diomed

Was bold alike in counsel, staunch in fight?

But now our brazen helms and iron swords,

360

Our bows and lances prove but idle reeds

Matched with the grim artillery, wherewith

Mortals outvie the bolts of Zeus himself.

But though our weapons, Lord, be scant of
strength,

We bear a stout heart, as we bore of old,

When we assailed the walls of Pergamus.'

To whom the Lord, 'Your valour and high
deeds,

And the just cause, for which your blood was
shed,

Are not forgotten by the Lord of Heaven.

Howbeit (for direst sore is healed by time),

370

To-night let injured Greece and vanquished Troy
Melt their old feuds in new-found amity.'

So they together towards the Scaian gates—
Trojan, and Greek, and men of Macedon,—
Marched ; and the plain of Ilium rang again
With clash of spears, and tramp of iron heels.
First Alexander, emulous to know
The mightiest warrior of the Greeks,—whose
wrath

Brought to the invading host such dire disgrace,
Whose vengeance laid the Trojan champion
low,

380

And sealed his country's victory,—came nigh,
Linking Achilles' arm within his own,
And drew him with mild force before the King.
Gigantic Ajax, and brave Diomed,
And Nestor old, and Sparta's fair-haired prince ^d,
With the much-suffering lord of Ithaca,
Followed : and ancient heroes swelled the train,
Born in the golden ages of romance,
Theseus, and Jason with his Argonauts,
Blind Oedipus and sad Antigone,

390

And Hercules, much famed in Grecian tale.

Nor were they wanting, whose imperious wills
Through ages swayed, or seemed to sway,
mankind,

^d Menelaus.

The gods of Greece : Poseidon, Pluto, Zeus,—
Strange Trinity,—this with the three-pronged
spear,

Wherewith he mastered the rebellious main ;
Dark-haired with sable cloak and ebon crown
His brother ; while the third, monarch and sire,
Wore a white mantle, like some fleecy cloud,
Folded in ample folds that reached his feet, 400
And o'er his brows a crystal diadem,
Like snows which sparkle, when the moon is
clear,

On the bleak summit of his royal hill ^e.

Near these, with bright hair streaming in the
breeze,—

His shining limbs undraped, save with the
light

Of his own beauty,—ray-girt, laurel-crowned,
Rode in his golden, two-horsed chariot
Phœbus Apollo ; whom the Muses nine
Circled, and Bacchus, with brown lustrous curls,
Clustering in ripe abundance round his face. 410
Came too the little love-god, mid the fair
Fairest, with bright wings of transparent down,
Golden and green and purple, like the bow,
Strung by the sunbeams o'er some watery
cloud.

^e Olympus.

Hard by, the war-god Ares with huge stride
Brandished his ponderous spear ; and ancient
Time

Shouldered his scythe ; and Hermes bare the
staff,

Which curbed the tumult of the voiceless dead ^f.
Came too the three weird sisters, who controlled
Birth, life and death ; both who the distaff held,
Who spun, and last who severed the spent
thread.

421

And tall impetuous Juno, spouse of Jove ;
And grey-eyed Pallas, with the virgin queen
Who guides the silver chariot of the moon ;
And Ceres, crowned with wreath of yellow
corn ;

And dark-browed Minos, judge of hell ; and
Pan

With many an uncouth Satyr, Faun, and Nymph,
Thronged in the rear. To whom the Lord of
grace,

Viewing the fairy pageant, by His Will
Called from the oblivious Paradise of dreams, 430
Thus with grave word and gentle accent spake :
‘ Not without praise I greet ye, gods of Greece,
Nurses divine, or haply half divine,
Of all things loveliest in the world and man !

^f The caduceus.

Ye live a charmed life in the immortal song,
And lofty wisdom of your worshippers ;
Live on, enrolled in this Mine earthly realm,
Subjects and lieges of the Lord of Heaven.
For who hath heart cast in so stern a mould,
That burns not, eyes that weep not with delight,
When, like the sweet breath of awakening
Spring,

441

Float o'er his mind visions and memories
Of Greece the beautiful, and Rome the strong ?
Live on ; and let the bard of years unborn
In the sun's fiery circle still behold
Glorious Apollo—his ambrosial locks
Sprinkled with dews of ocean—tracing high
His bright road mid the starry labyrinth ;
See Zeus beneath the clouds his canopy
Throned on the white domes of the silent hills ;
Hear in the murmur of the wild sea-waves 451
Laughter of gay sea-maidens, and the voice
Of Neptune, borne in his cerulean car.
Only, mid all the enchantments of His world,
Keep stedfast eyes fixed on the truth of God,
God—Who abides, while all things fleet and
change,
God—Whose great Glory, and Might ineffable
Are but the reflex of His boundless Love,
The mirror of His inward Righteousness.'

So spake He gracious, and the gods were
glad,

460

Saved from dim Hades, and by grace of
Christ

Dowered with the costly gift of endless life.

And thus, his noble visage marred with tears,
Answered the Olympian monarch, ancient Zeus :

'O fairer than the sons of men, O light
Of earth and heaven ! we champions of a creed
Long since outworn and perished ; we poor
shades,

Half substance and half dream, through ages
long

Steeped in the dull stream of oblivion,
Hail Thee, as stars salute the rising sun. 470

For the deep Love and Pity of Thy Soul,
Burning to white heat, have absorbèd quite
Our puny rays of earth-born deity.

Hail ! who for man's sake couldst put off the
god,

Quit Thine immortal vigour, and stoop down
To years of shame, and helpless poverty.

Hail ! who couldst let Thy Dear and Sacred
Heart

Be broken by man's dark ingratitude ;
Enter Thyself, a faint and lifeless shade,
The gates of hell ; then, rising, reign at length

With the twin crowns of manhood unapproached,

481

And Thine Eternal Godhead perfected.'

He said ; and all the assembled multitude,
Prone, as true Greeks, to laughter, and to
tears,

Wept ; nor one Argive, nor one Trojan cheek,
But felt the chastening heaven-born influence.

Yet soon all care and sadness were o'erwhelmed
In ecstasy : for their dear country Greece,
Long dead, was now alive again ; and God,
Kinder and fairer than their utmost thought, 490
Vouchsafed Himself to be the Light thereof.

Therefore with pæans and the voice of lyre,
And rapture of divine enthusiasm

Hymning their King, they all together fared
Unto the well-built walls of holy Troy¹⁴.

And as they marched, the loyal citizens
Came forth to meet them, as it were one
man,

Chanting this song of triumph on their way :—

' Come, heavenly Guest, to Whom all hearts
belong :

Lo, the dear home of ancient chivalry, 500
Theme of all poets, fountain of all song,
Opens her gates to Thee !

' Through ten long years beleaguered by the
foe,

Through years three thousand dust and shade
were we ;

But Thou hast turned again, with weal for woe,
Our souls' captivity.

' Dream we or wake? Is this the fragrant
breath

Of Spring, that gently on our brows doth
play?

And has the dark forgetfulness of death
Fled from our hearts alway? 510

' No sleep, no dream,—our Hector's dancing
crest,

Priam, Achilles, Ajax, all are there,
And One than all our bravest and our best
More famous and more fair.

' Bring olive, twine the myrtle, weave the bay;

Fling crocus, violets wan and roses sweet;

(The King of gods enters our gates to-day)
And cast them at His feet.'

So sang they, and so triumphed, till the day
Wore to his setting; but when dark-eyed night
Her spangled curtain o'er the world outspread,
Old Priam with the stewards of his house 522

Ordered high banquet in the royal hall.
Good store there was of seasonable fruit,
And flesh, and honeyed cakes, and cheering
wine.

The sons of Priam served their father's guests :
Borne were the cakes by young Astyanax,
While Ganymede, now to his home returned,
In well-chased goblets bare the sparkling
wine.

When all had supped, the attendant seraphim
Made with their golden harps sweet symphony,
Praising the Lord ; and the whole warlike host
Joined voices, till the rafters rang again. 533

'Now let us sing to God on high,
Throned in the immeasurable sky,
Who gives us life and breath and food,
All-wise, All-bountiful, All-good.

'Sing we likewise to Christ the Lord,
From earth expelled, to earth restored,
Who, scorning not with men to sup, 540
Did break the bread, and bless the cup :

'Last to the Spirit, Who doth instil
Into our wayward mind and will
The hopes that cheer, the thoughts that
bless,
And the best grace of thankfulness. Amen.'

Much converse held they afterward, as sons
Long from their home estranged, who meet
once more

Round the familiar hearth, and hear the voice,
Yet unforgotten, of their parent kind.

Anon, the Master, rising, prayed for rest ; 550
For night was now far spent, and through mid-
heaven

The waxing moon, in solitary pomp,
Spread her white sails on waves of pearly
light.

So Hector seized a torch in either hand,
And through the halls and painted corridors
Guided his Prince ; until they reached a court,
Where in a golden laver a clear spring
Of babbling water rose, inviting sleep.

Hard by, a curtained chamber was disclosed,
Having high posts of gilded bronze, and couch
Strown with soft coverings of purple wool. 561
Here kneeling to receive the parting word
Of benediction, Hector went his way ;
And soon the castle of the Phrygian kings
Was hushed in sleep.

In visions of the night
His long-lost wife and mother of his boy,
Andromache, beside him stood ; no more
Radiant with smiles, as when of yore she came

To greet her warrior arming for the field,
But woe-begone, and wet with tears : ‘ Ah me,’
She mourned, or seemed to mourn, ‘ doth
Hector live

571

Faithless, unmindful of the loved and lost ? ’

Whereat a long and bitter wail, prolonged
In answering notes from many a female voice,
Echoed along the courts and porticoes
Of Priam’s palace. Hector, starting up,
Sprung from his couch, and called ‘ Andro-
mache ! ’

But no voice answered : only far away
A sound, which seemed half whisper and half
sigh,

Fell on his ear. So, casting round him cloak 580
And tunic, with all speed he traced his way
To the far chamber, where the Master slept ;
And said, ‘ O King, a nightly vision strange
Troubled my spirit ; wherefore I am come
To show Thee what befel, and learn from Thee
What I thereat should answer, or what do.’

To whom the Lord of grace, ‘ Not long, My
son,

Thou from the loving partner of thy youth
Shalt be divided. With the morrow’s sun
Trojan and Greek, along the Mysian shore, 590
March with me to the sounding Bosphorus.

There I, embarking, sail to other lands :
You and your brethren, to your ancient homes
Returning, shall behold the wives ye loved
Hastening to greet you.' So with gladdened
heart,

And much amazed, the hero turned his steps ;
Nor woke, till Phœbus from their Eastern lair
Summoned his steeds, and brought the cheerful
day.

Now from the slumbering city's battlements
Sounded a loud alarm ; and herald's voice 600
Through field and street high proclamation
made,

That Alexander and his host forthwith,
Armed in full panoply, should seek the plain
'Twixt Xanthus and Scamander, there to wait
Their Lord's behest. Who, when the ranks
were closed,

Rode forth, and heartened them with gracious
words.

'Your knightly service, men of Macedon,
Ye have fulfilled right loyally, as Greeks,
Scorning to soil a not ignoble name.

Now for a season ye behold My face 610
No more : but ere we part, brave soldiers Mine,
(Brethren I rather call ye ; for whoso
Wearing My Cross, worketh My Father's will,

Friend is and brother of the Lord straightway;)
 I praise your aid and faithful fellowship,
 Who many a day o'er mountains, and through
 wilds

Cheerful have journeyed; many a night have
 slept,

Uncanopied, save by the starry sky.

Victors of Asia, soldiers of the Cross,

Comrades of Christ, farewell!' He spake, and
 they,

620

Joyful that He, Whose virtue had dethroned
 From his high seat their own Olympian king,
 Should deign to name them comrades of His
 own,—

Set forth obedient; and this song the while
 Sang the brave Hellenes to their Orthian strain¹⁵.

'In the days when the world was yet young,
 and when

Men were like heroes, and gods like men,

Greece was the land of lustre and fame,

Which filled all ears with the noise of her name.

Sing the golden days of our youth: O then
 Men were as gods, and the gods like men.

631

'Greek sailors roamed o'er the perilous sea,

Greek soldiers were known for their gallantry;

In Greece the king-poet was born, whose verse
Through the lands our mighty acts did re-
hearse.

Sing, Hellenes, sing for the glorious time,
When the world was alive, and Greece in her
prime.

‘The Greek saw a god in the waves and trees,
In the sunbeams’ dance, in the voice of the
breeze,

In the death which ended, the birth which
began,

640

And the life which unfolded the powers of man.

Sing ho, for the land of the brave and free,
Which brimmed and o’erflowed with divinity.

‘The Persian king, on his throne far away,
Heard of our deeds with wrath and dismay ;
And down, like a swarm of flies, to our coast
Came the spiteful, spiritless, insolent host.

O then indeed for stout heart was need,
When the sky was dark with the shafts of the
Mede.

‘But Greece was alive and awake that day, 650
And her children fearlessly rushed to the fray,
And the slaves of the great King trembled and
fled,

By the heroes of Athens discomfited.

O the day, when all Asia's strength and
renown

Were quelled by a little Grecian town !

' At length, when our King Alexander arose,
The tide of battle was turned on our foes :
Back on herself the proud East was hurled,
Till the world was Greek, and Greece was the
world.

Sing, warriors, sing for the days of power, 660
When the world was awake, and Greece in
her flower.

' But ah, the flower faded, the strength decayed ;
Greece and her fame in the grave were laid ;
And Time's dull stream rolled recklessly o'er
Brave hearts, and high hopes that lived no
more.

O the sad dark days, when Hellas lay dead,
And the fire of her fame was extinguishèd !

' Now a new Alexander, the greatest and last,
Binds the whole earth in one empire vast,
Lifts undisputed His sovran Head, 670
Judges the quick, and reigns o'er the dead.
Sing a world restored, redeemed, forgiven,
And Greeks new-born in the kingdom of
Heaven.'

Meanwhile the Achaian chiefs, and those of
Troy

Pursued their way beside the Hellespont,
And the great inland lake, which lies midway
Between the *Æ*gean and the Euxine seas.
Blue was the sky, and tranquil the warm air ;
For spring, the holyday of bird and flower,
Spring, the sweet season of awakening life, 680
And brighter colours in the earth and sky,—
Was now beginning ; and their hearts kept
tune,

But now awake from the long sleep of death.
Two days they travelled, and two nights en-
camped

Beside the waters of the purple sea :
But when the third morn showed his golden
head,

Far off, the glancing towers and minarets
Of the fair city, built by Constantine,
Shone, like a vision painted in the clouds. 689
Whereat, as nearing now their journey's end,
They sate them down upon the shingly beach ;
Made fire of gathered sticks ; and, while the
waves

Rippled melodious at their feet, prepared
A mess of barley-corns and oaten meal.
Then a grey-bearded minstrel—one of those,

Whose simpler music and forgotten lays
Inspired the mighty bard of Greece,—uprose
And tuned his lyre ; anon with trembling hands
Striking the chords, thus sang the ancient
man :'

‘The sun in heaven is riding high, 700
All sun-bewitched the waters lie,
The blue hills and the forest green
Float in a mist of silvery sheen ;
No shadow dims the smiling bay,
No clouds are in the heavens to-day.

‘It is the birthday of the spring ;
The glad earth doth awake and sing,
And dimpled buds and drooping flowers,
Still wet with yester-evening’s showers,
Lift up their heads, and seem in fun 710
To laugh at their old nurse the sun.

‘The little lads, all wild and gay,
Are down upon the shore at play ;
And many a castle in the sands
Is moulded by their busy hands,
Till, by a rude wave smitten, fall
The moated mound and laboured wall.

‘We, children too of joy and mirth,
Born in the spring-time of the earth,

Like flowers, which open to the skies 720
Their timid heads and wondering eyes,
To Thee our new-born spirits bring,
Eternal Sun, Immortal Spring !'

All praised the minstrel and his song ; but
he,

'O if the father of all minstrelsy,
By whom alone ye Trojans and ye Greeks
Live in the minds of men, himself were here,
To wake his sleeping harp, and lift your souls
High on the wings of his diviner song !'
To whom the Lord, 'Great Homer is not
dead : 730

In his old island-home he lives again¹⁶.
There in a lonely grotto, where his ear
Catches the wild voice of the changeful sea,
Apart from men, he sings the tale of Troy
And bold Ulysses. Thither now, with crew
Of stout Athenian mariners, I sail
Over the blue fields of your isle-girt main,
In his own home to greet him. Rise, My sons,
The daylight waxes old ; Heaven'scheering lamp
Right overhead sheds his meridian fire : 740
Time is we compass the remaining stage
Of this our journey.' So they buckled tight
Armour and brazen greaves ; took shield and
spear

Joyful in hand ; and, while they onward marched,
 (For souls, disumbered of their mortal flesh,
 Are lessoned each by other, and rejoice,
 Tasting new truth, and larger sympathies,) After the Hebrew measure raised this strain.

'Sing we right merrily to God our strength :
 Strike tabret, sound the clarion, wake the
 lyre.

750

Lord, when Thou wentest with Thy chosen host,
 The heavens rejoiced, the earth was glad, the
 sea

Laughed, and the multitude of isles therein.
 We joy before Thee as men in harvest-time :
 For they who sate in darkness, being fast
 bound

In misery and the iron chain of death,
 Now, all unfettered and enfranchisèd,
 Follow the world's Great Reaper¹⁷, Who with
 joy

Brings them again, bearing their sheaves with
 them^{g.}

Thus singing, to Scutari's walls they came 760
 Over against the Golden Horn, which shone
 Alive with ships from many a distant land.
 Moored on the near side of the narrow strait,
 Of antique form, with oars in triple tier,

^g Psalms lxxxi., xcvi., cxxvi.

Well-manned, well-armed, and brave from beak
to stern

With trophies of their ancient victory,
Rode the good ships of Athens. Whence a
boy¹⁸,

Clad in a sea-green tunic, lightly leapt,
And, running breathless mid the Achaian ranks,
Stayed not, until he reached the heavenly
King. 770

'Who art thou boy?' enquired the Lord; but
he,

'Ask Xerxes and the Persians, whom my skill
And the brave hearts of these my countrymen
Taught to invade the sacred land of Greece.
Of old, Themistocles men called me, now
They hail me as the little sailor-lad
Nautidion.' 'Thou imp of vanity,'
Broke in the fierce Achilles, 'where hath fled
Thy beard, thy manly stature, and the shield
Wherewith thou foughtest?' 'I am brave as
thou,' 780

Answered the boy, 'and mark not thy proud
words:

But if the King would learn my boyish form,
Him will I tell. Know then that, after death,
A bodiless spirit ages long I roamed
About this world, and found not seeking rest:

For the old thoughts of guile and stratagem
Clung to me ever, and my soul was sad.
Therefore when time was full, and the ancient
dead
Came from the grave, to visit earth once more ;
Not in my former flesh, but born again 790
In the weak semblance of an innocent boy,
I rose ; and fain hereafter, if Thou please,
Would live as child.' The Master heard his
speech,
And turned His gracious eyes compassionate
Full on the boy, until he fearing wept ;
Then, with right hand laid gently on his head,
Thus prayed : ' Defend, O Father, this Thy
son,
That, guided by Thine Arm Omnipotent
Across the gloomy waves of Hell and Death,
He may cast anchor in Thy heaven at last.' 800
Now, smiling mid his tears ; like sunbeam fair,
Which through the lattice of some castled
cloud
Glancing, doth rim its ebon walls with gold ;
The boy Themistocles with eager voice
Cried out, ' See yonder, Lord, our gallant ships,
Manned by the heroes, who at Salamis
Fought a good fight for Greece and Liberty.
This very day, ere setting of the sun,

Let us embark, and turn our iron keels
Unto what city or isle Thy heart incline.' 810
'Nay,' said the Lord, 'to-night we tarry yet
With the brave host of Argos and of Troy;
Thou too, their late-born kinsman, not un-
known,

Shalt be our guest: to-morrow with the light
Cleave we the salt spray of the hoary main.
Meanwhile, assembled here,—a valiant host,
In diverse ages born, but of one race,—
Hold we, as Greeks were always wont of yore,
High games and tournament: thou, Hector,
lead

The sports on shore; and thou, Nautidion, 820
For the swift race equip thy stalwart crews.'

So till the day declined the chiefs of Troy
And Argos, with the Athenian sailors matched,
Stripped and barefooted, as their custom was,
Wrestled, and leaped, and ran, and plied the
oar,

Rejoicing in their strength. The Lord Him-
self

Ran with the foremost, steered the rival craft,
Or judged between the combatants. At length,
When all grew weary, to the camp they came;
And supped on roasted flesh of lamb or kid, 830
And held much joyous talk, till all the stars

Were lit in heaven, and Cynthia's silver lamp
Shed her pale glory on the doubtful plain.

Then, praising first the Lord of night and
day,

'Who in His excellent goodness made the
heavens;

The sun to rule the day, the moon and stars
To govern the night ;' they laid them down, and
sought

On skins of woolly sheep well-earned repose.

But ere the new-born sun with violet
And primrose bordered the deep azure sky, 840
The chiefs of Argos and of Ilium
Arose from sleep ; and, gathering with all speed
Arms and accoutrements, with noiseless feet,
Like good Æneas erst from burning Troy,
Fled from the camp, ('for,' said they, 'lest we
tears

Unmanly shed, rest of our gracious King,')
All mid the friendly silence of the moon¹⁹,
Much grieved at heart ; and having marched
a space,

Mounted a grassy hill, and on the crest
Watched ; as the fleet beneath with anchors
weighed, 850

Canvas unfurled, and benches duly manned,
Waited their Lord. He, rising with the sun,

His steps inclined to the sandy shore.
Then sails were set to the wind ; and like young
swans,
Who with arched neck and snowy plumage
gay
Ride on some English stream,—or Isis fair,
Or turbid Thames,—the galleys with all speed
Glided adown the sea-fed Bosphorus.
The seamen shouted, and the friendly Turks
(Into whose hands, when Greece and Rome
decayed, 860
Had fallen the sceptre of the gorgeous East,)
Caught the contagion of their glad applause.
From guns high-stationed on each fortress near
Flashed out a thunderous welcome ; while him-
self,
The Lord of Islam in his royal barge,
Came forth to greet the world's new Sov-
eign.
He, crowned with aureole of heavenly fire,
Stood high upon the raisèd poop, as once
Great Cæsar in the fight at Actium ²⁰,
And hailed the courteous monarch ; who in
turn 870
With grave obeisance doffed his tasseled cap,
And on the deck stood gazing, till the fleet
Rounded a headland, and was lost from sight.

Now through the winding strait, and through
the sea,

Which links the Bosphorus and Hellespont,
They shaped their course: the blue and cloud-
less sky

Brooded above them, and the glancing waves,
As from the facets of a diamond,
Shot into thousand sparks the mirrored sun.

But when the chariot of the god of day 880
Westward inclined, they rested weary limbs
On the green meads which line the marble
mere.

There waiting till the bright-robed Queen of
night

Shone o'er the waters, through the further
strait

Fared they ; nor stayed again, until they viewed
The broad *Ægean*, with its hundred isles,
Spread out before them, girdled by the moon.
Here—some beside the benches of their ships,
Some 'neath the shade of spreading palms on
shore.—

They wooed the gift of slumber, and full
soon 890

In sweet unconsciousness their souls were lulled.
But on the morrow, hailing the first dawn,
With zeal redoubled to their oars they bent,

Trimmed every inch of sail, and lightly flew
Over the waves, the North wind blowing clear,
Till in the distance rose the wooded cliffs
Of Homer's native isle. Saluting then
With joyful cheer the approaching land, they
sailed

Into the haven; and prepared to greet
The Muses' eldest child, the world's delight, 900
The prophet and arch-poet of their race.

NOTES TO BOOK II.

- 1 Line 20. *Bright-eyed Raphael*. Raphael, as impersonation of God's 'Unfathomable Mind,' (see Bk. I., l. 61) is here chosen to represent Greece, the nursery, *par excellence*, of human genius.
- 2 l. 24. *Arched helm*. In allusion to the *phalos*, or projecting rim of metal, which surmounted a Greek helmet, as may be seen in the Æginetan sculptures at Munich.
- 3 l. 32. *Great Alexander*. It may be objected that neither on grounds of chronology nor of justice ought the first place among Grecian worthies to be assigned to Alexander. My answer is that, though inferior to Homer and Aristotle in genius, and to Socrates in character, he is yet the greatest living force in Greek history. Alexander did for Hellenism what, if I may make the comparison without irreverence, our Lord did for Hebraism—converted it from a merely national into a cosmopolitan influence. This view is ably propounded by Prof. Mahaffy in his 'Story of Alexander's empire.'
- 4 l. 72. *Whereof our Christ is Abbot*. Cf. Dante's Purgatory, Canto XXVI.
- ‘al chiostro
Nel quale è Christo abate del collegio.’
- 5 l. 138. *Lengthening out the loud ‘Amen.’* Cf. Paradiso, Canto XIV.
‘Tanto mi parver subiti ed accorti
E l’uno e l’altro coro a dicere ‘Amme.’’
- 6 l. 153. *The threatening front of their embattled squares*.
The Greek phalanx was a column consisting of about 4,000

men, armed with lances varying from 21 to 24 ft. in length. It was so arranged, that the spears of the fifth rank projected three feet beyond the first, so that every soldier in the front rank was protected by five spears, his own, and those of the four files behind him. See Smith's Dict. of Antiquities.

7 l. 206. *Egypt was the nurse.* Greek architecture and Athenian civilization, if not Greek science, were derived from an Egyptian source.

8 l. 218. *Clitus fondly loved and foully slain.* Clitus was the foster-brother and familiar friend of Alexander, whose life he once saved in battle, but, owing to some disparaging remarks, was slain by his friend in a fit of jealousy and drunkenness.

9 l. 219. *The chiefs who parted and ruled the royal heritage.* These were Perdiccas, to whom Alexander left his ring, but who founded no kingdom; Seleucus, king of Babylon and Syria; Ptolemy, of Egypt; Antigonus, of Asia Minor, and Antipater, of the parent-state Macedon.

10 l. 226. *The two Theban heroes.* Pelopidas and Epaminondas, through whose genius Thebes rose for a short time to the chief place among the Greek states.

11 l. 253. *The imperial hearth and citadel, &c.* The East, though conquered by the Romans, was never properly Romanized, the imperial government rather overlying than supplanting the more deeply-rooted Greek culture, and Constantinople became in fact the Greek capital of the Hellenized East, though her rulers still retained the style of Roman Emperor, and derived their succession from Julius and Augustus.

12 l. 317. *The faithful hound.* The name of this famous dog was Argus. He recognized his master and died immediately afterwards. See Odyssey XVII. 326.

**Αργον δ' αὖ κατὰ μοῖρ' ἔλαβεν μέλανος θανάτοιο
Αὐτίκ' ιδόντ' Ὁδυσῆα ἐεικοστῷ ἐνιαυτῷ.*

- Or, according to Pope's translation,
- ‘Takes a last look, and having seen him dies :
So closed for ever faithful Argus' eyes.’
- 13 l. 328. *Ran with unequal steps.* Virg. Æneid II. 724.
‘sequiturque patrem non passibus æquis.’
- 14 l. 495. *The well-built walls of holy Troy.* In allusion to the two favourite Homeric expressions,
‘Ιλιος ἵρη, and ἐϋκτίμενον πτολεθρον.
- 15 l. 625. *Orthian strain.* The ‘Orthios nomos,’ mentioned by Plato in the ‘Republic,’ is supposed to have been some sort of military air, and may have borne a remote resemblance to our ‘British Grenadiers.’
- 16 l. 731. *In his old island-home.* I have chosen Chios for the birthplace of Homer out of the seven cities, ‘Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodus, Argos, Athene,’ which claimed that honour.
- 17 l. 758. *Follow the world's Great Reaper.* Suggested by the line ‘O holy, awful Reaper.’ Hymns A. and M. 386.
- 18 ll. 767, 68. *A boy clad in a sea-green tunic.* As in the case of Alexander, I may be blamed for giving the foremost place among Athenians to Themistocles. My defence is that in a city, pre-eminently, of sailors and sculptors he was the first sailor, as Phidias was the chief sculptor.
- 19 l. 847. *The friendly silence of the moon.* Virg. Æn. II. 255.
‘per amica silentia lunæ.’
- 20 l. 869. *Great Cæsar in the fight at Actium.* Compare ‘Hinc Augustus agens Italos in prælia Cæsar,
Stans celsa in puppi,’ &c.—Æn. VIII. 678.

TRANSLATION.

- l. 133. Because thou wast not ashamed to confess Me, I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, in the Name of the Thrice Blessed Trinity.

BOOK III.

Greece. 33.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord visits Homer in the island of Chios, and proceeds thence to Athens, where the sculptors, philosophers, and other great men of the age of Pericles appear before Him.

ALL through the night, watched over by
the moon

And the bright starry sentinels of heaven,
Beside the shore the seamen and their Lord
Slept: but when morn, in saffron mantle clad,
Called to his airy station in the sky
The wakeful lark, and every briar and blade
Glistened with dewdrops, and the woods were
glad;

They threw off sleep, and making hasty meal
Of oaten cakes, and pulse, and tempered wine,
Learnt from the first-met boyish islander 10
Where the hermit dwelt. Then with the Athenian lad

The Master climbed a woodland path, beset
With tufted grass, and carpet of bright flowers,

Till in the midmost glen appeared the cave,
And seated on the threshold,—whom they
sought,—

The hoary-headed patriarch of the grove.

A little host of silvan choristers

Was gathered round him; some upon his head,
Some on his shoulders perching, while the rest
Picked up the fragments of his frugal meal, 20
Tripping and chirping fearless on the grass.

His wonder-working harp—a three-stringed
lyre

Of ancient form—lay at his feet: the man,
Grey-headed and grey-bearded; large of brow,
But small of stature; wearing on his front
A most serene and childlike smile; with eyes
Of heaven's own blue, which told without re-
serve

The inmost workings of his gentle soul,—

Seemed, like the fabled Satyrs of old times,

To have grown incorporate with Nature's self:

So deeply with their silent influence 31

Had earth and sky and ocean, which he loved,

Writ their divine disorder, and engraved

Their bright eternal freshness on his face.

He then, thus sitting and thus communing,

Sang solitary to his well-loved lyre

Of gods, and heroes, and the famous dead;

When he was ware that One beside him stood
In form and semblance like the immortal gods :
Arising therefore, wingèd words spake he. 40
'O God or heaven-born King,—for less than
king

Consorts not with Thy lofty countenance,
And noble mien, and gracious calm regard,—
Say who Thou art, and who the dark-eyed boy
That bears Thee company, and wherefore now
To the old bard of Chios Thou art come.
I know, and yet not know Thee ; for yon
wreath,

Wound in the gracious clusters of Thy hair,
Tells of belovèd Greece, mine ancient home :
Yet is there somewhat in Thine eye, whereto 50
Zeus would abase the head, and bow the knee.'
'Ask not My Name,' the laurel from His Brow
Untwining, quick returned the Lord of Life,
'Ask not My Name, but take the wreath, thy
due,

O bard, the breath of whose melodious song,
Like the sweet murmur of the winds and
waves,

Rings through all time, makes music in all
hearts ;

Father of poets, Homer !' Hearing this,
The old man trembled very exceedingly,

And said, ‘ I fear me greatly if Thou be 60
Some messenger or angel, sent by Christ,
The God of the Hebrews : for but yesterday
Came hither, smooth of chin and swift of tongue,
One who discoursed right sadly of a God
Wroth with our race, and purposed to consume
Earth and the vault of heaven in flames of fire.
“ E'en now,” so spake he, “ draws His advent
near ;

Therefore, old man, repent thee of thy sins ;
Wear sackcloth, sit in ashes ; lest the Judge
Hail thee, all unprepared, to endless death.” 70
If such Thou be, I love Thee not, and would
None of Thy gifts.’ But, recking not his words,
The boy exclaimed, ‘ O cruel and unkind,
To do the sweet Lord such courtesy !
Not Zeus nor Lycian Phœbus ; not the Muse,
Thy mistress, wrought such glory for the Greeks,
Or showed such love, as Whom thou seëst now.
For know, old man, no minister of heaven,
But God Himself, Whom all the stars obey,
Doth stand beside thee. Over the wide sea, 80
Full many a league from Asia have we come,
He, with a chosen band of seamen brave,
And I their ancient leader,—all to greet
The unthankful poet of our race, who spurns
Our mindful friendship, and our Master’s love.’

Then did the bard, yet doubtful and amazed,
Regard once more the features of his King ;
As one who, vexed with visions of the night,
Opens his eyes, and bids bright day repel
The dim shapes of his dreaming phantasy. 90
But when, the third time looking, he beheld
Nought in that Countenance but Love divine ;
Then melted all the fountains of his heart,
And, weeping sore, he cried, ‘Lord, I believe :
Thou art the true God, and the childish sprites,
Wherewith we peopled earth and air and sky,
Were but vain meteors, and uncertain gleams,
Drawn, or reflected from Thy central Sun.
Let not the wreath, which girt the Lord of
heaven,
Circle this head, nor let Apollo’s leaves 100
Be shamed, in crowning a disloyal brow.’
‘At least,’ the Lord made answer, ‘come thou
down
To the sea-shore, and greet thy countrymen,
True Greeks and faithful, who, not seeing
thee,
Will quit thine isle disconsolate.’ He said ;
And with kind arm through dell and tangled
copse
Led the good minstrel down, while laughingly
The boy half said, half chanted to himself

The words, which nigh three thousand years
agone

From Homer's lyre had sounded,—‘So he
spake¹,’ 110

But the old man, fearing, hearkened to his
speech,

And went his way in silence to the shore
Of the loud-roaring sea.’ Anon they reached
The margin of the wood ; and the blue main
Lay stretched before them, bright with scales
of gold,

And glittering armour, burnished by the sun.

Then Homer kneeled upon his knees and
prayed :

‘God of the storm, Whose glorious Voice is heard
In the hoarse ocean, when its waves are stirred
From the dark caverns of the abyss profound,
And rage resistless round :’ 121

‘Thy royal way is o'er the waters wide,
Thy wheels are borne above the restless tide ;
Who owns Thee not, great Father, sovran Lord,
On earth, in heaven adored ?

‘God of the sailor, Whose immortal Feet
Once trod the stormy billows, Thee I greet,
Incarnate Son of God, nor dare to tell
The praise Thou knowest well.

'God of old Homer, blessed Spirit divine, 130
When calm in noontide light the waters shine,
I see Thee ; when the rippling waves rejoice,
I hear Thy still small Voice.'

Thus prayed the seer of Chios ; and his face,
Gentle before, seemed rapt in ecstasy,
And somewhat of the glory of his God
Dwelt on his quiet lips, and bathed his brow.
Whereat the Lord, uplifting eyes to heaven,
Spake words of benison : ' My present Grace,
The Father's Love, and the sweet fellowship
Of the Ever-blessed Spirit rest on thee.' 141
Then did the watching seamen, who stood near,
Hail with delight, and joy exuberant
The long-loved minstrel of their ancient land.
And, ' Let the harp which sang the heroic deeds
Of our forefathers,' cried they, ' tune some lay
Likewise for us, their not degenerate sons.'
But Homer answered, ' Deeds of warlike fame,
And journeys bold upon the perilous sea
Like me no more : yet somewhat, if ye will, 150
In praise of spring-time and the Lord of spring,
Had I my harp, perchance I might assay.'
Then Raphael quickly ran ; and, searching, found
Within the hermit's cave the lyre he loved,
Seated whereon, his little feathered friends

Held merry conclave ; so, returning, brought
 And laid it at its master's feet : but he
 Struck the responsive chords, and cheerly sang

'The fields are gay with buds anew,
 The sky puts on a brighter blue, 160
 The little wingèd minstrels make
 Sweet melody in dell and brake.

'Lord, as in spring the slumbering earth
 Wakes from its dream of frost and dearth,
 Do Thou our laggard souls beguile
 With Thy divine and gracious Smile.

'Adorn our spirits with Thy dress
 Of Hope and heaven-born Righteousness ;
 Make us in very love to sing
 Songs of delight to Christ our King. 170

'Great Father, Everlasting Lord ;
 Sun of our earth, true saving Word ;
 Star of the soul, sweet Spirit blest ;
 We praise Thee, when we love Thee, best.'

So sang he ; for the bright-haired god of day,
 And Zeus, the mighty cloud-compelling king,
 And the kind Muse unseen, whose gentle breath
 Had poured enchantment on his lyre,—at once
 Now seemed incarnate in the glorious Form,
 And deep compassion of the living Christ. 180

Sweetly the shadows of his dying song
Were melted in the wild waves' harmony :
As when the hymn of the sky-cleaving lark,
Out of the deep blue sounding, seems the voice
Of heaven itself, or of those wingèd guests,
Who waft our feeble prayers to the Heart of
God.

But now the impatient sailors, clustering round,
Besought the Lord from Chios to set sail,
Crying, ‘Fast wanes the day ; the queen of
Greece,

Athens, our mother-city, from afar 190
Beckons her long-lost children to her side.’
So saying, they with speed the galleys manned,
Wading knee-deep amid the surf of the sea,
Till none remained but Homer and his Lord.
Who thus the good old man with tender words
Gracious addressed : ‘Keep thou a stedfast
heart :

So, in the fulness of the days, thy harp
No more in solitude shall tune its song,
But in the courts and palace of thy King.’
E’en as He spake, from Smyrna’s promontory
Sprang up a favouring breeze, wherewith the
ships 201
Sped o’er the buoyant fields their Westward
way.

Danced merrily the plumèd waters blue,
Cleft by their brazen keels, as if the heart
Of the great ocean did rejoice, to bear
The whilome masters of his azure realm.
Two nights they ploughed the moonbeams, and
two days

Traversed the bright path of the wheeling sun,
Till Salamis—blest isle, of fair renown²,
Washed by the briny billows,—stood to view ;
Then, veering to the right, with lusty cheer 211
They gained Piræus' port at fall of day.

If men, for years divided from their home
By the wide belt of desolating sea,
Are glad, when they behold the distant cliffs
Of their dear country ; how much more should
these—

Wayfarers in the dim and silent land
Beyond the grave, and banished, not for years,
But through long centuries from their native
earth,—

Shout and rejoice with exultation ? 220

Now, then, with vision rapt contemplating
Their long-lost citadel, some laughed indeed,
But some wept tears, or swooned, in sheer
delight.

Albeit far other semblance bore it now,
Than in the days of its imperial fame.

No more the champion-goddess, wrought in
bronze³,

High on the hill-top reared her warlike head,
Armed with her lance and buckler terrible.

No more the line of long and lofty walls
Ranged from the city to the far sea-shore. 230
No more those better walls,—a race of men,
True princes of their kind,—but Greeks half-bred,

Inglorious and unlettered, thronged the space,
Trod by the feet of their immortal sires.

Mindful of which, the boy Themistocles
Knelt him before the Lord, and clasped the
knees

Of his Protector, praying, ‘Could not He,
Whose Will almighty raised the ruined walls
Of Babylon, and from the dust of the earth
Built up anew the buried stones of Troy, 240
Grant to fair Athens, worthier of His love,
Her ancient grace and glory?’ Said the Lord,
‘The works of your sweet city are as flowers
Too rare and lovely to be hid alway
In this sequestered corner of the world.
Therefore a nobler home for them remains
In a far country, which ye know not yet,
When time is full. Howbeit for this while
Thy prayer is granted : with the morn thine eyes

Shall see thy heart's desire accomplished.' 250
So they, believing, laid them down, and slept,
Gladdened at heart, and wishful for the day.

But when the last flush from the glimmering
West

Faded outright, and the great dome of heaven,
Cut by the clear horns of the crescent moon,
And earth, and sea, and all the stars were still:
A throng of ghostly workmen, armed with
line

And weapons of their craft; who bare thereto
Huge loads of ivory, marble, stone, and gold;
Besieged the city. At their head came one, 260
Stout-limbed, blue eyed, with flowing flaxen
beard,—

The master-architect,—whose voice and hand
Ordered their movements. Scant of speech
were they,

But, mounting noiselessly the rocky sides
Of the ancient citadel, with charmèd hands
Reared pillar, frieze and cornice; set on high
The maiden goddess with her spear and
shield;

Cleared out the wide enclosure of the Pnyx,
And crowned the work by building the long
walls,

Which knit the city to her double port. 270

Then Phidias (for 'twas he, who, like great Jove

Amid the obedient lesser deities,
Marshalled and cheered the not-reluctant host,) Called from the ranks a comrade to his side,—
One who was wholly Greek, from crown to heel;

Of grave aspect; the nostril slim and straight,
Quite even with his brow; the beard well-trimmed,

And mouth, as with a sculptor's chisel carved,—
To whom 'My master,' quoth he, 'for, though

Heaven 279

Yield me to-night the sovran chief command,
Still doth the sculptor own the statesman lord;
Say, doth aught lack of the ancient grace,
wherewith

Thou and this hand, thy loyal minister,
Arrayed the mistress of the Grecian isles?'
'Nay, fairer seems, and statelier than of old
All which thy fancy planned,' cried Pericles;
'Keep thou the foremost place: thy works and fame

Have outlived mine, and the new Lord's decree
Cancels at once my vain supremacy.'

Thus having spoken, to the port they fared,
A group august of sages, orators, 291

Statesmen, historians, sculptors, warriors,
bards,—

Such as one city, since the birth of time,
Never before, nor shall not bear again⁴,—
Following their footsteps. Branches, as they
went,

Plucked they of laurel, ivy, and olive gray,
And strowed them in the roadway, or disposed
In arch triumphal, fitly to receive
Into their walls earth's Lord and the angels'
King.

299

Now on the verge of dawn, alone unquenched
Of all the golden myriads of the sky,
Flickered the faint torch of the morning star.
And like the City, seen in vision once
By John the loved disciple, which, as bride
Adorned to meet her husband, came from
heaven

Complete with gates of pearl, and streets of
gold;

Or as the fabled goddess, who sprang forth
In brazen panoply from the brain of Jove ;
So showed restorèd Athens, in one night
From a poor burgh, decayed and ruinous, 310
Into her glorious ancient self transformed.
Fair is the queen of the Adriatic sea,
As he well knows, who from her lofty tower

Views the decorous, rich variety
 Of pillared, antique palace, clustered dome,
 Terrace, and bridge, and long-drawn portico,
 Shining, against her deep cerulean floor,
 In the red splendours of the level sun.
 Fair too is English Oxford, bright with blooms
 Of drooping gold and lilac, when sweet spring
 Or opening summer sheds around her spires
 And towers, and gardens, and time-hallowed
 walls

322

The mellow lustre of its misty smile.
 But fairer still, I ween, upon that morn,
 Clothed in the faultless grace, which Art divine
 On moulded stone or marble can bestow,
 Shone the new-risen Queen of ancient Greece.
 Here, like a casket rare and richly chased,
 Framed in the clear abyss of sapphire sky,
 Stood out preëminent, with carven frieze, 330
 And fluted shaft, and high-raised pediment,
 The shrine, which is the wonder and despair
 Of every nation, and of every time ^a.
 Hard by, the Ionic temple reared its front,
 Borne on a graceful row of marble maids ^b.
 While in the distance, girt with avenue
 Of lithe Corinthian columns, rose the fane,
 Built by the late-born Roman Emperor ^c,

^a The Parthenon. ^b The Erechtheum. ^c Hadrian.

In praise of Jove, and of that captive race,
Which o'er the minds of men was mistress still.

Hark how the stir and hum of rising men, 341
The boatswain's whistle, and the chief's
command,

Fill the fresh air! Behold the joyous Greeks
Drawn up on deck, exulting in their home,
To wait their Lord's command; while on the
marge,

Like the two laurelled poets^d, oft pourtrayed
By artist's pencil, who assayed to cross
The vast and shadowy realms of Acheron,—
Two figures, cloaked and ivy-wreathed, appear
Their King's approach to welcome. He with
joy,

350

Like the young sun first rising in his strength,
Came forth, and stood upon the furthest prow;
Whom Phidias thus bespake: 'My Lord, O
King,

All hath been wrought according to Thy will.
See the fair temples on yon famous height,
Sacred of yore to many gods, but now
Owning but One; behold the field, whereon
Our people framed their laws; the garden still⁵,
Where Plato held his philosophic court.
See too this squadron of unsceptred kings,— 360

^d Virgil and Dante.

Kings in the realm of fancy and of thought,
And gods belike in the fierce field of war,—
Come from the abodes of night, as travellers
Footsore and weary from some desert waste,
To worship and confess Thee evermore
King of all kings, God Supreme of all gods.'

To whom the Lord with answer grave returned :

'Athenians, in all wisdom, save the best,
Passing the sons of men ! I marvel much,
Regarding heads so famous, works so fair. 370
Your mighty names, as beacons on a hill,
Shine eminent, beyond the mists of time,
The clouds of envy, and the storms of fate.
All hail, then, master-spirits, by whose aid
What art, what science sprang not into life ?
I, Who from Zeus, your reigning deity,
Wrested the spiritual sceptre of the world ;
In human flesh of Hebrew mother born,
But of High God begotten,—I, true Word
And Reason of the Eternal Cause, salute 380
The interpreters of His Divine Intent,
The skilled revealers of His glorious works.
High priests of man and nature were ye once ;
Now are ye stewards to the Lord Himself.
But lest the fire and music of your minds
Pass unrewarded,—which were nowise meet,—

Go, wind Me garlands ; for My pleasure is
To crown ye for your merits, some with gold,
And some with myrtle, rose, or violet.

Thou and thine ancient master Pericles 390
Retain the wreaths of state, whereof your peers
Have deemed ye worthy.' Therefore they made
haste,

And, gathering by Cephissus' purling stream
Branches of myrtle and the fair wild rose,
Wove into wreaths, and brought them to their
Lord.

Then, as at great Athené's festival
In ancient days, the long, illustrious line,
Conspicuous in august simplicity,
Set forth rejoicing to the sacred hill. 400

First poets,—Sophocles, a comely man,
Erect and grave, as now he lives in stone
Within the dim walls of the Lateran ;

Well-matched with Æschylus, his buskined peer.

Then soldiers,—at their head Miltiades,
And brave Leonidas, the Spartan king.
(No lapse of ages shall obscure their fame,
Who fought against all hope, each valiant
Greek⁶)

Facing a thousand Medes ; such might inspired
The gods and mountains of their much-loved
home.) 410

The historians next,—serene Herodotus
With ample figure and well-humoured smile ;
Then wise Thucydides with close-knit brow
And mouth compressed : the sculptors after
them,

Myron, and Scopas, and Praxiteles⁷ :
Then orators and statesmen : then long line
Of sages, with old Thales at their head,
The Stagyrite and Plato walking last :
Then he, who, rather than the truth disown,
Smiling at death, the fatal hemlock took. 420
Nearest the Lord came he ; but last of all,
Mantled, and crowned with diadem of bay,
The Lord Himself. Between the walls they
marched,

A noble army matched with nobler Chief ;
And much the citizens marvelled, watching
them.

As in some lordly park or ancient wood—
Richmond, or Marlborough, or the bleaker
moors

Of shaggy Scotland,—wind in stately file
With branchèd horns a troop of mottled stags
Up the defile of some grass-covered dell : 430
Or as along the vast and vaulted nave
Of some huge Gothic minster, two by two,
Deacon and chorister and robèd priest

March with their mitred Abbot up the steps
Of the dim chancel, to do honour meet
On day of feast to Christ or to His saints ;
So did the long procession wind its way
Up the steep hillside to the Parthenon.

High on the topmost step of the fair shrine
The Lord took up His station, and straightway
The poet Æschylus before Him knelt. 441
A man he was of rough and frank aspect,
Red-bearded, burnt by the sun ; who, rising,
spake :

'Behold, O just and sovran Arbiter,
The bard and playwright of our tragic stage,
Who sang Prometheus, torn and manacled
Through the fierce jealousy of vengeful Jove :
Sang too the prince of Argos, who from war
Homeward with joy returning, fell by hand
Of his unfaithful spouse. Forget not then
How in my verse the doomèd maiden dear⁸ 450
Shed, at the bidding of Diana's priest,
Her saffron robe to earth ; and beautiful,
As in a picture, shot each heartless judge
With shafts most pitiful from her pleading eyes.
Nor that mine other verse do Thou forget,
Sung by the martyr of our race, what time
Fetters of adamant enclosed his frame,
And an insatiate vulture tore his heart :

"O depths divine of purple sky ! O springs⁹
Of mighty rivers, and ye swift-winged winds !
O endless rippling laughter of the waves, 461
And eye of heaven, all-seeing ! witness ye,
What wrongs, a god, from hands of god I bear."
Hear too his latest cry, when mighty Zeus
Sent earthquake, thunder, and the bolts of
heaven

To o'erwhelm his spirit,—“O awful mother
earth¹⁰ !

O belt, all-circling, of ethereal fire !
Behold, I bend beneath a doom unjust.”'

Then Sophocles, grey-haired, with tranquil
eyes,

Sober and mild, took up the word, and said : 470
' Not, Lord, to me the fiery force was given
And rage prophetic of my rival's song :
On others other gifts the Muse bestows.
Yet did the Theban maid, Antigone,
When she, to guard her brother's corse from
shame,

Defied the injurious tyrant, speak brave words¹¹,
Destined not soon to die or be forgot.
Likewise great Ajax, when, resolved on death,
He called and bade his infant son farewell,
Saying, ‘Son, I wish thee happier than thy
sire¹², 480

Like him in all beside ; for then in truth
 Wert thou no craven spirit nor wholly vile : —
 Haply, so speaking, he, or I in him,
 Soared from the level earth awhile, and reached
 The starry region of our Master's praise.

After this manner spake the poets all,
 Pleading ; but when the sculptors showed their
 face,

All rose to do them honour ; for no bard,
 Painter, or warrior with their fame could vie.
 France, Rome, and England have their warlike
 chiefs,

Great as Miltiades of Marathon : 490
 But sculptor like Praxiteles no land
 Saving the land of Hellas, since time was,
 Nourished, or brought to light. What grace
 untold,

What more than mortal loveliness may dwell
 In stone or marble, he alone can know,
 Who with his own eyes hath beheld at Rome
 The marble miracles of ancient Greece.
 There the sweet lines of boyhood, and the
 form

Of supple, vigorous youth for ever stand 500
 Fixed by the chisel of the cunning Greek :
 While the grave charm of stately womanhood

Once, and for all, and past appeal is told
By the tall, half-draped goddess ^e, who, as queen,
Reigns from her cloistered exile by the Seine.
Childhood and youth are wonderful ; but nought ¹³
Excels the first of God's creation,—
Strong-willed, imperial, majestic man.
Thou, Phidias, in thy King of gods and men ¹⁴,
Who with the wealth of hyacinthine locks, 510
Ambrosial, streaming round his brow and chin,
Seems yet almost divine, as when his nod
Made all Olympus tremble,—thou hast framed
In stone, more eloquent than words or song,
If not the face of God, yet noblest type
Of man, high-souled, serene, magnificent,
Image of his Divine Original.

Nay, e'en the fading glories of old Greece—
When bound by foreign yoke her skilful sons
Toiled, and at bidding of an alien lord,— 520
Outshine the zenith and meridian blaze
Of other lands. How strives Laocoon,
Wrapt in the monstrous serpent's fell embrace !
How live the clustering curls, low brow, full
lip,
And graceful form, and look, half smile, half
scowl,
Of savage, beautiful Antinous !

^e The Venus of Milo.

How the great river-god lies stretched at length¹⁵,

A host of chubby babes with childish glee
Climbing, like flowers, about his giant limbs!

How broad-browed, stern Augustus lifts his arm,

530

Clad in the terrors of his mailed coat,—

A Roman Jupiter,—and seems to quell

The listening senate with his awful voice!

Of these and many more the sculptors came,
Nameless, but not unknown; and told, each one
The story of his work: ‘But not to us,’
Cried all, ‘the wreath is due; rather to him,
Who shaped the nimble caster of the quoit,
Or the sweet Eros of the Capitol¹⁶.’

Then the wise men of Greece,—a reverend throng,—

540

Adorers of the goddess Truth, drew near
And knelt before the Master. These were they,

Who sought with sweat of the brain, and zeal unquenched

The how and wherefore of great Nature’s works;—

Whence sprung, and whither tends the toilsome strain,

The whirl of thought, soaring ambition vast,
Hopes, fears and passions, which we men call
life.

First came the father of philosophy,
Thales, who deemed that water was the spring
And source primordial of all earthly things; 550
With him, who traced sun, moon, and solid
land

To the prime element of formless air^f.
Came too Pythagoras, Italian seer,
First of the industrious and sky-measuring
crew,

Which ends with Newton and Copernicus.
By numbers he, and due proportion fixed
Taught that the cosmic order was made fast;
So said, 'All things are number.' Came the
sage,

Who held that love and discord, on the seeds
Of earth, air, water and primeval fire 560
Working, by hidden impulse, and slow change
Wrought the fair structure of the universe:
Then—so his own flesh, with the central flames
Commingled, might be born afresh as god,—
Into the fires of Ætna leapt headlong^g.
Followed the godless sage, Democritus,
Who, sign of plan or purpose tracing not,

^f Anaximenes.

^g Empedocles.

Nor other power in nature, save blind chance,
 Laughed at the riddle of the world ; and he,
 Who wept, perceiving all is flux and change^h.
 Came wiser Anaxagoras, as one 571
 Sober amid the drunken, from whose voice
 First in the Grecian schools the truth was
 heard,

That Order springs from overruling Mind.
 Next came the Athenian martyr, Socrates,
 Who from the skies brought down philosophy,
 Till then, of fiery ether, and blank space,
 And of all else discoursing, save of man.
 But he (O strange, that features so grotesque
 Should e'en be mated with so great a soul !) 580
 Reasoned of truth, virtue, and righteousness,
 And, knowing most, seemed least of all to know.
 All these before the Master passed ; at length
 Came Plato, the divine philosopher,
 A reverend man, long-bearded, and high browed,
 Whose noble face, calm and symmetrical,
 Beamed with the light of wisdom and good-will.
 Who, first the silence breaking, spake few words,
 Full on the Lord, as waking from a dream,
 Fixing the depth and passion of his eyes ; 590
 'Three things I know, O Master : God is One'¹⁷ ;
 And God is Good : the righteous man alone

^h Heraclitus.

Is happy, dead or living. I have said.'
Then the great Stagyrite, whose sovran mind
Reigned undisputed o'er the thoughts of men
Through twenty centuries, nor yet hath found
Victor or rival,—like in face and mien
To his beloved forerunner, but with brow
Yet closer knit by contemplation,— 599
With reverence low confessed his wiser King.
Likewise he said, 'John wrote that God is Love ;
And I that God is Thought : now, Lord, in
Thee¹⁸

I see two Deities made one ; and hail
God Who is Loving Thought, and Thinking
Love.'

Now all had passed before Him, and the
Lord
Gave judgment. First He called Praxiteles,
And bound the myrtle-wreath about his brows,
Saying, 'Because the marble thou didst mould
Had grace and innocent beauty, such as none
Of all since living equalled or excelled ; 610
I crown thee thus.' Then old Anacreon
(Who of the naughty love-god, and his wiles¹⁹,
And of that merry insect, who as king,
Perched on the tree-top, trills his dainty note,
Himself, in verse no whit less dainty, sang ;

And, now grown old and hoary, told of love,
Which grows not old,—love only, and love
always,) 610

Gracious He called, and wreathed the violets
Round his gray head, ‘For that he not disdained
Small things and lowly, the Lord, without
Whose care 620

Not e’en a sparrow falleth to the ground,
Gave him this honour.’ Next to Sophocles,
And his great rival silver crowns He gave.
The wreath of roses, doubting not, He laid
On Plato’s brow : ‘Because, of mortal men
Wisest, save only one, he loved to speak
Not with his own, but with his master’s voiceⁱ.’
The golden crown, which Thales eyed askance,
To Aristotle, prince of sages, fell.

Lastly, for Socrates yet rarer meed, 630
No flowery coronet, nor ring of gold,
But the white robe, and martyr’s palm, remained.

Then new decree went forth from Christ the
King,

Borne by the angelic herald, Raphael ;
That all, once more assembling with the dawn
In Dionysus’ temple, should recite
Somewhat in verse ; whereto this theme was
set,

ⁱ Socrates.

*The tale of empires ; or the Church of Christ ;
Or last, the calm reign of victorious Art :
Liked they not these, he bade them range
abroad* 640

Taking new flight, as fancy prompted each.
All rendered glad assent, but chiefly those,
Who won no garland, strove by fresh essay
To earn the praises of their royal Judge.
Soon as the appointed hour was come, ap-
peared,

Clad with high buskins, on the famous stage
Three men, Thucydides, Herodotus,
And the great master of all eloquence,
Freedom's high champion, bold Demosthenes.
When tongues were hushed, thus spake Thucy-
dides, 650

Comparing diverse realms, present and past.

'Thrice, since the tale of mortal life began,
Hath ris'n a race, imperial, strong, and wise,
To mould anew the destinies of man.
The *first* unveiled to him the mysteries
Of Truth and Knowledge ; gave him ears and
eyes
For the good things, from Nature's lap which
spring ;

Called down the Spirit of beauty from the skies ;
Taught the dumb stone to speak, the lyre to
sing,

And to the soul a feast of new delights did bring.

'The *second* with the sword controlled man-
kind, 661

In sterner school, and harder precepts bred.

Old Rome recked not the victories of the mind ;
From shore to shore her conquering legions
spread,

Till at her nod all nations bowed the head.

The *third*, like her, o'er sea and land did reign ;
But, wheresoe'er her fleets and armies led,
Brought life, and light, and freedom in her
train ;

And still her empire wide unbroken doth main-
tain.'

Rose then in turn Herodotus, and told 670
The story of the Church ; how nursed, she grew
From Jewry's bounds to the world's furthest end.

'Meanwhile the Church her chequered course
had run,

A web of gold athwart man's history.

Born on the far hills of the Rising Sun,

And taught at first her growing wings to try

By wanderers in the wilds of Sinai,
She, when the races of the vanquished world
Beneath the yoke of Rome did prostrate lie,
Abroad the banner of the Cross unfurled, 680
And on the conquerors scorn and grim defiance
hurled.

‘The seed she scattered lived and waxed
amain;

Soon in the city did she plant her sway,
Which had with fire and sword her prophets
slain.

And, when the mighty realm in ruins lay,
Of fierce barbarians the sport and prey,
Grasping the fallen sceptre in her hand,
She stretched her arm to stem the world’s
decay;

Amid the wreck as mistress took her stand,
And o’er the unruly states a second empire
spanned. 690

‘Anon, grown haughty in her high estate,
She with imperious edicts sought to close
The mouths of men; and from her bowels
straight

A motley herd of nameless sects arose,
Which o’er the reverend Mother dealt their
blows;

Till, with the strife unending worn and tired,
She lost, in idle pomp, and empty shows,
The spirit, which once her saints and martyrs
 fired,
And faith in loyal hearts, and hope no more
 inspired.

'Only in England, mid the sad decline, 700
Did the fair worship of devouter days
With somewhat of its pristine lustre shine.
There men were found, who trode the ancient
 ways ;
There in the mighty minsters hymns of praise
Still to the throne of God were daily borne ;
There, as the gleam which in the West
 delays,
Still dwelt the light, though doubtful and
 forlorn,
Linked with the glorious past, and heralding
 the morn.'

Then bold Demosthenes, in praise of Art
And sage philosophy,—how all in Christ, 710
As rivers in the absorbing ocean,
Find their accomplishment,—discoursèd thus :

'Yet glimpses of some golden days in store
All through the ages, and in many climes
Had been by souls prophetic shown before.

Words, which find echo in these late-born
rhymes,

In far-off lands, and legendary times
From the old minstrel's harp in Salem rung ;
Sounds, that live on in sweet cathedral
chimes,

By mourning Hebrew captives once were sung ;
Hopes of the Christ unsealed the Roman poet's
tongue. 721

'The minster's long arcade of pillared stone²⁰
Looks back, as rivers to their parent rill,
To the fair shrine, two thousand years agone
Founded at Athens, on the famous hill.
Thy Look of tranquil Love, and stedfast Will,
O Prince and Saviour of the world, was caught
In ages past by monks in cloister still,
Who, for all time, on living canvas wrought
His countenance, who filled their God-entrancèd
thought. 730

'The cost and pain, which did the Lord much
wrong,
The courage, which nor hate, nor scorn could
quell,
On tuneful tablets of undying song,
Were by Messiah's minstrel written well.
The triumph of the soul o'er death and hell,

Through Him, Whose Cross and Passion did
destroy
The curse of sin, and break the tyrant's chain,
Was hailed afar, in hymns of sacred joy,
By Music's young high-priest, the inspirèd
Austrian boy^k.

'More than all these, the sages,—whose regard
Had ranged o'er man and nature, and made
clear

741

The darker visions of the seer and bard ;
Who, mid the darkness and the desert drear,
Unto the blind gave eyes, to them that
fear

Courage and strength,—these were in very
deed

Prophets of Christ, and in their words we
hear

Faint whispers, like the sighing of the reed,
Which swell to the full tones of His diviner
Creed.'

He ceased ; and Plato, crowned with wreath
of rose,

Spake thus in honour of the lore he loved. 750

^k Mozart.

' See, when upon an infant's eye
God's light first glimmers through the mist,
How, reaching out a tiny fist,
He thinks to compass moon and sky.

' But soon the mind discerning shows
The distance of the things of sight,
As, on the eye which sees, a light
Shines, borrowed from the self which
knows.

' So, when divine philosophy 759
Lifts from our soul the darkening screen,
And marks the gulf, which hangs between
The man, and that he seems to be ;

' Then dawns there on his wiser mind
The distance of the things of thought,
And forms, for which he wept and fought,
Sink in the heaven of truth behind.

' Then words, which once did seem to bring
A meaning and a life, grow lame,
And what he fondly thought to name
Doth deepen to a nameless thing.' 770

To him with varying strain made grave reply
Wise Aristotle, decked with crown of gold.

'They said, "A nobler age is born :
Look up ; is this the time to cast
Sick eyes upon the setting past,
When full before thee flames the morn ?

'Behold, the path thou wouldest explore
Returneth whence it came ; for thought,
Which circles round itself, is nought—
A maze of language, and no more. 780

'The world recks not thy barren pen :
Ill dost thou then to turn aside,
Wrapt in a philosophic pride,
To dream of things beyond thy ken."

'I said, "Ye know not what ye ask :
Think ye that I might straightway find
An answer to the troubled mind,
In spurning mine unfinished task ?

'Man's soul is greater than ye wot :
The busy mart and crowded street 790
Give food for thought, but yet 'tis meet
To search for what appeareth not."

'They said, "If thou disdain to scan
The tangled maze of daily life,
Uncaring for the noise and strife,
Which mingle with the works of man ;

'God's universe hath wonders yet
For eyes and hearts that love to know :
Trace thou amid the ceaseless flow
The laws whereto the earth is set. 800

'Or farther if thy soul aspire,
Mark how the planets march aright
In rhythmic circles infinite,
Each compassing his central fire."

'I said, "'Tis well there are who read
The secrets of the earth and sky ;
Yet all that falls on ear or eye,
Reft of the mind of man, is dead.

'As, though upon a starless night
Nor form nor hue abides in things, 810
Soon as the sun doth wake, he brings
Each blade and floweret out to sight ;

'So doth a mist and darkness bind
All things we hear, or touch, or see ;
Until there rise, to set them free,
The ordering and transforming mind.

'Would ye that I should class and score
The stars and flowers, yet miss withal
The soul—that brightest gem of all— 819
Which shines and blooms for evermore ?'"

Last mild Anacreon in gentle verse
Of woman's sin, and of God's mercy sang.

'The veils of her eyes are prest,
And cold are her lips, for at break of day
Death came unawares, and bore her away :
Shall her soul now at length have rest ?

'Lo, she knew not the good nor the fair ;
And if, in her revels and gaieties,
A glimpse ever came of what true joy is,
It but darkened her heart's despair. 830

"How then shall she fare ?" say they,
"God hath scanned her work, and it was not
well,
And good of her man hath nothing to tell :
Will He blot her quite away ?"

"I judge not always," saith He,
"By words that are spoken, or deeds that are
wrought :
I will give her the peace which she blindly
sought,
For she loved and she wept :" saith He.'

When all had spoke, the assembly was dis-
missed
With words of grace ; and, seeing the Paschal
moon 840

Was well-nigh full, the Master set His face
Stedfastly tow'rds Jerusalem. But first
The warriors brave, who fought at Marathon,
And those, whose virtue held the strait defile
Against opposing myriads of the foe,
Marched at His bidding into the broad space
Betwixt the walls of Athens, there to hear
His words of blessing and farewell to Greece.

Then, when the plain was filled with arm'd
men,

He, riding with the fearless Spartan king 850
On this side, and Miltiades on that,
Into their midst ; bespeak them clear and strong
After this wise : ' Men, heroes of old times !—
Since they are heroes, who for hearth and home
Dread not to die,—on this your land of Greece,
Clad in your ancient arms, by grace of God
Ye stand, and with new strength invigorate.
Let now the rage and mettle of your hearts
Be tempered by sweet peace and gentleness :
For this My kingdom, not by deeds of blood,
But by kind arts and offices of love 861
Shall be new built ; and its foundations laid
On the sure basement firm of Truth and Right.
Ye therefore, in the commonwealth of God
Freemen elect, be bondsmen still at heart,
And yield unswerving fixed allegiance

Unto the Lord of love and righteousness.
For I too, living under Cæsar's sway,
Nursed not rebellion rude, nor roused alarm
Of bloody war, but rendered, as was meet, 870
To Cæsar tribute due, and fealty.

'Ye likewise, noble army, not unblest,
Of learnèd men, historians, sages, bards,
Who with your sweet songs, and wise elo-
quence
Vanquished the world, and made imperial
Rome
Bow to your mild, unwarlike sovereignty,—
Knowing all else, see that ye know your-
selves.

Good service truly have ye wrought for man,
And somewhat too for God: yet doth the
soul,
Undisciplined by sober faith, and fear, 880
Like untrimmed garden, nourish many a herb²¹
Of vile and noxious growth. Bethink ye then
Duly to trim the garden of your hearts:
For all delights of knowledge, art, or power
Fade; but the love of God is as a light,
Which shineth ever to the perfect day.
And now farewell, and peace be with ye all.
Raphael I leave amongst you, by whose hands
Ye in My living Church enrolled shall be,

And rightly grafted in the heavenly Vine. 890
 Who, to My side returning, shall forthwith
 Kindle the Greek lamp in the mystic Seven,
 Which stand before My Throne.' He spake,
 and moved

Shoreward with all His angels, as the sun,
 Now westering, mantled with a rosy flush
 The marble splendours of the Acropolis :
 Anon, embarking, cleft the watery way.
 They on the walls meanwhile, and round the
 quays

Clung populous, as bees who late in spring²²
 Hang in thick clusters from some flowering
 bough ; 900
 And suppliant, with bent knee and lifted
 hand,

Cried, '*ΕΤΛΟΤΗΣΟΝ ΉΜΑΣ ΚΤΡΙΕ.*'
 Therefore the Lord, with arms extended wide,
 Loving their faith and deep devotion,
 Spake words of blessing, '*ΧΑΡΙΣ ΑΓΑΠΗ*
'ΕΣΤΩ ΜΕΘ' ΤΜΩΝ ΗΔ' ΕΤΛΟΤΙΑ.
ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ, ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΙ, ΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ.'

Then, mid a blaze of glory, which illumed
 Sky, sea and land with rays of quivering gold,
 As the bright flame-girt Titan looked his last,
 And in that last look quenched his fiery
 soul,— 911

Glided the vessel with its heavenly freight
Into the bosom of the darkling main.
Shone out Cithæron's peak, Ilissus' stream,
And gray Colonos' olive-crownèd height ;
Shone with one farewell gleam the famous hill.
Anon fair Athens, on her rocky throne
Seated above the waters, slowly sank,
Like the spent embers of a torch, or trail
Of fiery sparks, left by some falling star, 920
Into the distance and the closing night.

NOTES TO BOOK III.

1 l. 110. *So he spake, &c.* Hom. Iliad, I. 33,

“Ως ἔφατ’, ἔδεισεν δ’ ὁ γέρων καὶ ἐπείθετο μύθῳ,
Βῆ δ’ ἀκέων παρὰ θῦνα πυλυφλυίσβοι θαλάσσης.

2 l. 209. *Salamis—blest isle. &c.* Cf. Soph. Ajax, 596,

“Ω κλεινὰ Σαλαμῖς, σὺ μέν που
ναίεις ἀλίπλαγκτος, εὐδαιμων,
πᾶσιν περίφαντος ἄει.

3 l. 226. *The champion-goddess.* Alluding to the statue of Athene Promachos, which stood on the brow of the hill, so as to be visible from ships sailing into the Piræus.

4 l. 294. *Nor shall not bear again.* A city could not again, unless the whole course of history were reversed, be itself a nation, and that the chief nation of the earth.

5 l. 358. *The garden still.* The Academy, a grove of olives to the west of the city.

6 l. 408. *Each Greek facing a thousand Medes.* At Thermopylæ the numbers were, approximately, 1,000 Greeks to 2,000,000 Persians: at Marathon the Athenians numbered 10,000, the Platæans 1,000, while the Persians, according to the most moderate estimate, amounted to 100,000 foot, and 10,000 horse.

7 l. 415. Myron was the sculptor of the famous *Discobolus*, or quoit-thrower; Scopas, perhaps, of the *Venus Victrix*, commonly called the ‘Venus of Milo,’ and certainly of the Niobe group, preserved at Florence.

8 l. 450. *The doomed maiden.* Cf. Æsch. Agam. 240,

Πρέπουσά θ' ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς . . . ἔβαλλ’ ἔκαστον θυτήρων
ἀπ’ ὅμματων βέλει φιλοίκτω.

9 l. 459, &c. Cf. Prom. 88. et seq. Ὡς δῖος αἰθήρ, κ.τ.λ.

10 l. 466. Prom. 1091,

Ω μητρὸς ἐμῆς σέβας, ὁ πάντων
αἰθήρ κοινὸν φάσι εἰλίσσων
ἐσορᾶς μ' ὡς ἔκδικα πάσχω.

11 l. 476. *Brave words.* Soph. Antig. 450—457,

Οὐ γάρ τέ μοι Ζεὺς ἦν δικηρύξας τάδε, κ.τ.λ.

12 l. 480. *Son, I wish thee.* Soph. Ajax, 550,

Ω παῖ γένοιο πατρὸς εὐτυχέστερος,
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὅμοιος· καὶ γένοις ἀν οὐ κακός.

The short and expressive *οὐ κακός* has, I fear, much suffered at my hands.

13 l. 506. *Childhood and youth are wonderful, &c.* These lines were partly suggested by the well-known chorus,

Πολλὰ τὰ δεινά· κοῦδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει.

Soph. Ant. 332.

14 l. 509. *Thy King of gods and men.* The extant examples of this celebrated statue are, of course, only copies, probably the work of the Græco-Roman period. The description in the text is from Homer, Iliad I. 528,

Ἡ, καὶ κνανέγησιν ἐπ' ὄφρυσι νεῦσε Κρονίων.
Ἄμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώντο ἄνακτος
Κράτος ἐπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ολυμπιον.

which lines Phidias very possibly had in mind when he designed the original statue.

15 l. 526. *The great river-god.* The colossal statue of the Nile and its sixteen sources, in the Vatican at Rome.

16 l. 538. *Eros of the Capitol.* The so-called *Eros Vaticanus* is the usual favourite, but I have always preferred the graceful nobleness and divine gentleness of its brother in the Capitol. Both are reputed from the hand of Praxiteles.

17 l. 590. *God is one; and God is good.* These are the axioms of the Platonic theology. See *Republic*, Bk. II.

18 l. 601. *God is thought.* God is defined by Aristotle as 'Theoria theorias', or, in the words of the late Prof. Mansel, 'Contemplation eternally contemplating contemplation.'

19 l. 611—616. *Who of the naughty love-god, &c.* The songs referred to are those beginning, Μεσονυκτίοις ποθ' ὥραις,

2. Μακαρίζομέν σε, 3. Θέλω λέγειν Ἀτρείδας.

The particular words in the two latter are,

Μακαρίζομέν σε τέττιξ,
"Οτι δενδρέων ἐπ' ἄκρων,
Ολίγην δρόσον πεπωκώς,
Βασιλεὺς ὅπως ἀείδεις.

Χαίροιτε λοιπὸν ἡμῖν
ἡρωες· ἡ λύρη γὰρ
μόνους ἔρωτας ἔδει.

20 l. 721. *The minster's long arcade, &c.* This connection is ably worked out by Mr. Ferguson, who shows how the Roman arch and the Greek column were combined to support the roof of a Christian church. A Gothic cathedral may be said to be, fundamentally, a Greek temple, turned outside in, with the Roman, afterwards the pointed, arch superadded.

21 l. 880. *Like untrimmed garden.* Cf. Shaks. *Haml.* I. 2,
'O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden, &c.'

22 l. 898. *Clung populous.* Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, 768,
'As bees in spring time . . . Pour forth their populous youth
about the hive in clusters.'

TRANSLATIONS.

l. 902. 'Bless us, O Lord.'

l. 905. 'Grace, Love, and Blessing be with you. Greeks and Athenians, fare ye well.'

BOOK IV.

Israel.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord sails from Athens to Acre in Palestine, and proceeds thence in turn to Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.

 FAITHFUL Star of the wandering soul,
 by Whose
 Guidance divine my frail and venturous bark¹
 O'er the dim ocean of the distant past
 Thus far hath travelled; now with altered
 course,
 Thrice blessed Spirit! to new realms I fare
 By God's own visible Presence glorified.
 Therefore do Thou with kind and stedfast beam
 Mine eyes enlighten, that no earth-born mist,
 Nor fitful meteor drive me from my track
 Devious; but, having Thee for Friend and
 Guide,

IO

I may unfold the roll magnificent
 Of prophets, saints, and martyrs of the Church
 And trace the golden lines and characters

Graven thereon, which point through mists of earth,

Dark clouds of doubt, and grosser gloom of sin
To the clear verities of God and Heaven.

Now through the Christian world the voice of song

Was hushed in church and minster ; for the day,
Whose extreme bitterness made night of noon,
Drew near apace. Meanwhile the Prince of life,

20

Mourned for that Passion by His Bride elect
On this side heaven, now, in His Father's strength,
Sought the much-famed region, where He once
Dwelt in our flesh, and in our nature died.

Four days, four nights He with His faithful crew

Traversed the deep, between the scattered isles
Once swayed by sovran Athens, and along
The northern coast of the great inland main.
But when the fifth morn sparkled in the East,
The low-browed hills of Palestine far off 30
Showed through the mist ; and nearing they despaired

The port of Acre, last entrenchèd post
Of Europe's chivalry in the Holy Wars.

Therefore the Lord, much brooding o'er the fate

Of Israel,—once beloved of God Most High,
Now through all nations, and all lands dispersed,
Outcast, uncitied, and from Zion's hill
Exiled, by reason of the sin they sinned,—
Prepared, encompassed by His heavenly host,
To greet the land of His nativity. 40

Soon He was ware that all the nearest strand
Was peopled with a lamentable host,
Clad head to foot in sackcloth,—kneeling some,
Some on their faces prone,—whose mournful
cries,
And groans unceasing chilled the heart with
fear.
So lean were they and haggard, that the bones
Pried through their flesh, and flow of constant
tears
Had worn a channel in their bloodless cheeks.
'And art Thou come, O Jesus,' cried the first,
'In wrath, as once in mercy? Art Thou come 50
With red apparel, and garments dyed in blood,
Treading the winepress of the wrath of God,
A Judge most terrible,—to whelm Thy foes
With Thy hot fury and indignation?'
As men, who in some city long besieged
By foeman's onslaught, and the deadly stress
Of famine, worn at length by diverse ills,

Creep through the plain aghast, and bow at
feet

Of the victorious chieftain ; so these men
Before the Lord lay prostrate and dismayed. 60

‘O most forlorn and miserable throng,
Say wherefore, not with wreaths of victory,
But clad in robes of mourning, ye are come
To greet your King ?’ Thus spake the Holy
One ;

And Him an aged and gray-bearded priest,
Who wore beneath his sackcloth a white robe
Bordered with Hebrew characters, thus addressed
With eyes downcast ; ‘O Thou Whose precious
Blood

Was bought and sold by these most impious
hands !

What plea for mercy can I make ? What hell 70
Can purge my sin ?’ Long time the Master
stood,

Recalling memories of that dreadful night,—
The wrestlings of His spirit, the rude cries
Of the false-hearted multitude, the last
Moment of bitterest doubt in God Himself :—
And as before, when her accusers haled
The sinful woman to be judged of Him,
So now He downward stooped, and wrote on
the earth,

Troubled : then lifting eyes thus answer made ;
' Pardon may come with penitence and tears, 80
Seeing that now, vexed by the general curse
Of all mankind, through ages ye have borne
The weary burden of a guilty soul.

Rise therefore, and look up. The God of grace
Wills not that one, bought with the precious
blood

Of His dear Son, should perish utterly.

No blackest sin is wholly past His cure :²

Whose Love divine, quenchless, unfathomable,
Leaves not a place, in all His universe,
For everlasting pain, or blank despair.' 90
As prisoners doomed to death, who all night long
Count the dead hours, and watch with toil up-
reared

The fatal engine of their punishment ;

If tidings of some royal, glad reprieve

Reach their astonished ears, feel life once more
Flow through their veins, and load of monstrous
care

Raised, as by magic, from their lightened souls :
So they, from fiery penance and long death
Rescued past hope, with tears of thankfulness,
Grieving, but yet rejoicing, went their way. 100

Now, as the crowd dispersed, behold, two men,
Attired in prophet's garb of camelskin,

Approached the Master : this with hoary beard
Descending to his waist ; tall, haggard, stern³ ;
Yet with a certain mildness in his eye,
As of a meek soul, called in evil days
To guide a city, or rule a warlike host.
Stalwart and large of limb his comrade stood ;
Black-haired, black-bearded ; wearing on his
front

A wild and more than earthly majesty : 110
As if the god of thunder and of strength,—
Mighty Jehovah,—Whom he served and feared,
Had framed the features of his chosen seer
After His own Divine Similitude.

‘Prince of the world and Israel !’ quoth the
first,

‘Behold the lawgiver and judge, who led
The people of the Lord from Pharaoh’s realm
Unto the land of Promise. Yet not I
By strength or wisdom of mine own, but God
With outstretched Arm and Hand omnipotent
Parted the obedient waters, cleft the rock, 121
Marched as a cloudy pillar through the day,
And as a fiery column through the night
Before His people. Now by signs no more,
But in the brightness of His glorious Self,
Deigns He to visit man : and I, who gazed
On the fair land of Canaan, entering not,

Hold converse with the King, the Lord of Hosts,

And plant my feet within the blissful land.

Nor for the first time do I now behold 130

The Light Invisible : to these poor eyes

On Sinai's top the Splendour was revealed

Of the Everlasting Father ; these same orbs

Viewed in the latter days, on Tabor's height,⁴

The glory of the Coëternal Son.'

Thus spake he ; and Elijah, bending low,
After him thus addressed the Prince of heaven.
'Lord, when Thy servant's work on earth was
done,

Lo, fiery horses and a fiery car

Wafted him heavenward from Elisha's side. 140

These flaming couriers, if such Thy Will,

Shall waft Thee likewise to Jerusalem.'

Answered the Lord, ' But not till yonder moon
Her cōplete round have perfected in heaven,
Would I before the sacred gates appear.

Meanwhile I bid ye twain before me go,

My scouts and heralds, to the mount which lies
Over against the City, there to wait

My coming : that the word may be fulfilled,

Spoken of old by God, " His feet shall stand 150

Upon the Mount of Olives." So they went

With joy, and travelling gathered to their side

Full many a priest and prophet, prince and king,
With hoary patriarchs of yet older times ;
So He with triumph and due pomp might ride
To David's city. 'Lord, Thou art our God ;'
Thus sang the pilgrims jubilant, 'of old
Thy counsels have been faithfulness and truth.
Great signs and marvels hast Thou wrought for us,
O Prince of our salvation ! Thou hast been 160
A refuge from the storm, and from the heat
A shadow ; Thou, O glorious Lord God,
Hast swallowed up our death in victory ^a.
We will exalt Thee therefore, we will praise
Thy wondrous Name ; O Way, O Truth, O Life,
O First-begotten of the faithful dead !'

But Michael, captain of the heavenly host,
With all the attendant Cherubim, made haste
To equip the fiery chariot for their Lord.
First the twin horses, bright with shining manes, 170
High, starry fronts, and eyes of living flame,
They bathed in dews of heaven ambrosial,
And on their shoulders bound the embossèd yoke
With thongs of broidered hide : the chariot next,—

* Isaiah xxv.

A hollowed pearl, most lustrous, set around
With rosy-hearted opals, rubies rare,
Deep sapphires, and the sunny chrysolith,—
They decked with stars on either side, and girt
With silver mist, drawn from the Throne of
God ;

Then, in bright wings arrayed,—some azure
blue, 180

Some emerald, or purple flecked with gold,—
Compassed the royal car, which stood self-
poised,

Waiting the Lord's departure. He forthwith
Leapt lightly to His seat, and mounting straight
Into mid air, traversed the cloudy space,
Environed by the flying Seraphim,
Until He reached the town of Nazareth.

There He alighting mid His ancient haunts
Wandered ; and, when the day was now far
spent,

Entered the little Christian shrine, and knelt
Before the quiet altar ; while the band 191
Of forms angelical, which swelled His train,
Listened in silent awe the while He prayed.

For ghostly recollections of the days,
Passed in His native land of Galilee,
Thronged through His Soul ; until but yester-
day

Seemed it that He,—a fair and gentle boy,—
Sate sporting at His mother's feet, with John
His cousin, or in Joseph's workshop toiled.
'Father, the world Thou gavest Me to heal 200
And save,' so prayed He, 'quickened by My
Word,

And the sweet influence of Thy Spirit blest,
Now waits the visible reign and sovereignty
Of Thine anointed Son. Now therefore, Lord,
From heaven Thy dwelling-place, where Thou
enthroned

Livest, and evermore shalt live and reign
In light and glory unapproachable,
Give ear, and glorify Thy Son.' The house
Filled, as He spake, with incense ; and behold,
The glory of the Lord with sudden blaze 210
Gleamed on His Brow and raiment ; streaming,
thence

Reflected, on the little chapel's walls,
And the rapt faces of the kneeling throng.
Anon the radiant effluence, more intense,
Gathered above the altar ; and a Dove
Out of the liquid Splendour shone and grew ;
Who, with fair pinions of transparent gold,
Above the Sacred Head, once crowned with
thorns,

Floated ; and from the silence far away 219

A Voice, like bells heard in the calm midnight,
 Or the low, musical murmur of the sea,
 Or last notes of a mighty organ, rolled
 Along the quivering sides of a great church,
 Came sounding, ‘I am Alpha and Omega,
 The End and the Beginning, First and Last,
 Which is, Which was, Which evermore shall be,
 Almighty.’ Then upon their faces fell
 The favoured sons of heaven; and with glad
 voice
 Cried, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts!
 All the whole earth, and all the heavens are
 full
 Of the Majesty of Thy Glory.’

230

So they sang,
 Till evening fell upon the darkened earth,
 And the white moon, a ball of silver fire,
 Rose; and the stars about the blue expanse
 Thick-strown appeared, like topaz-work in-
 wrought
 Into some regal, azure canopy.
 Then from each golden point, set in the sky,
 And from the moon, and every vale, and hill,
 Seemed it as though a solemn strain arose
 Of universal music, ‘Praise the Lord,
 O all ye works of His, in every place
 Of His unbounded, vast dominion.

240

Ye Sun and Moon ; ye Stars of God ; thou
Earth ;

Thou mirror of His glorious Face, the Sea ;
Mountains and Rivers ; Bird, and Beast, and
Flower ;

Children of men and Angels, bless the Lord,
Praise and exalt His Name for evermore.'

But Moses and the Carmelite all day
With quick feet journeyed towards Jerusalem ;
Hailing at every village, as they went, 250
Some mighty man, or seer, of bygone days,
To swell their train. Here Joshua, with a band
Of armèd patriots ; here Melchizedec,
Turbaned, and habited in priestly garb ;
There king Josiah met them,—a fair youth,
With gentle face, high brow, and golden hair.
There Israel's royal bard,—a boy again,
As when of old his father's flocks he led,—
Came with long, shining locks, and ruddy face,
His faithful harp o'er his left shoulder hung, 260
Singing the while, 'Out of the mouth of babes,
O Lord most Excellent, O Lord most Wise,
Thou hast ordainèd strength, and by their
hand

Hast stilled the avenger and the enemy.'
As on the ensuing morn they nearer drew
To Salem's royal city ; lo, a group

Of sandalled friars, in habit of coarse serge,
Eleven in number, (twelve of yore were they,
Now less by one disloyal head,) who went
With prayer and fasting to Gethsemane ; 270
There in the garden, where their dearest Lord
Suffered, to watch and weep till break of day.

But when from Olivet the marching host
First saw their ancient walls, and Zion's hill ;
With joy, by former anguish made more strong,
Thus they extolled their Prince and Saviour :

' We are the soldiers of the Lord of hosts ;
God comes from heaven to be our
King :

Awake, ye tribes of Israel, and bring 279
The mighty men from all your coasts,
The chosen heroes of God's ancient race,
And march with merry noise unto the Holy
Place.

' Tell out the praises of the Lord our God :
Who led us through the wilderness ;
Who rescued us from want and sharp dis-
tress ;
Upholding us with staff and rod,
When we were sinking in the waves of death ;
And clothing our dead bones with His life-
giving Breath.

What people, or what nation of past days
Was so beloved of God Most High ?
Beheld His Glory, heard His Voice so nigh ;
Saw His great works, and sang His
praise ? 292
Had Him at hand always to shield and
charm ;
And knew the blessed strength of His Eternal
Arm ?

'Break into singing, earth, and laugh, O
heaven ;
We sinned and died ; we rose again,
When bitterest ages of remorse and pain
Had drained our dross, had purged
our leaven.
Now hailing, Whom we once did foully
wrong,
We crown the Cross of Christ with amaranths
of song.' 300

The Master, borne meantime from Nazareth
Unto His native town of Bethlehem,
Stayed His aerial car above the spot,
Held dear and sacred by all Christian hearts.
For here sometime, in a low manger rude,

Lay, wrapt in swaddling-clothes, with ox and
ass

Stabled, the Eternal Godhead's Image bright ;
Before all worlds begotten ; God of God ;
And Light of perfect Light ; Who put on flesh
For us men and for our salvation, 310
And was made man. Therefore the heavenly
choir,

As erst, when they proclaimed the tidings glad
To shepherds, watching by their flocks at night ;
So now, the tumult of their airy wings
Suspending, stood upon a shining cloud,
And swept the strings of their euphonious harps ;
Singing, ' To God be glory, for the Man
Christ Jesus, born in guise of mortal child,
Who, to the heavens ascending, sate Him down
At the right hand of the Majesty on high,—
Is come again to claim His own. Amen. 321
Enter, Lord Jesus, on Thy promised reign.'

Thereat a flight of stairs, like gossamer
Bathed in sweet dews, and glistening in the sun ;
Or rime, which sparkles on the leafless boughs
Of trees in winter,—reached from heaven to
earth,

Framed with translucent pearl, and all compact
With starry, light-engendered diamonds.
Along the stairs the wingèd sons of God

Stood, ranged on either side ; while through
their midst, 330

Crowned with the threefold rays of Deity,
Walked the dear Lord of angels and of men.
To Whom, alighting near the sacred cave,
Advanced forthwith an aged man august,
Robed as a king, and with a king's regard ;
Who cried, ' All hail, Righteous and Royal
Lord,

Hope of the nations ! Who, as once on earth,
So by Thy Father's side in highest Heaven,
Unwearying, o'er the changeful minds of men
Thy fixed eternal Purpose hast pursued ! 340
Ascend the throne of Israel, for Thee
From the foundations of the world prepared.
Take to Thyself Thy realm and heritage.
I, born in distant times, the wisest deemed
Of men created, welcome and adore
The Incarnate Wisdom and true Word of God.'

As thus he spake, behold, a childish troop,
Clad in white ephods clean, with argent cross
Broidered, and silver lilies in their hair,
Approached the cave ; who greeted with delight
The Friend of little children ; crying, ' Hail,
Jesu, Redeemer, once Thyself a child : 352
For Thee our innocent blood was spilt, to Thee
The firstfruits of our newborn lives we bring.'

Then, at His feet low kneeling, each received
The cleansing dews baptismal, and the Sign,
Which heals our sin. Nigh on the threshold
stood,

Robed as a Hebrew matron, with long hair
Wound in a knot behind her decent head,
Mary, the meek-eyed mother of the Lord. 360
Beside her knelt the Magdalen, with hands
Clasped, as in prayer, and wonder-stricken eyes
Fixed on the glad Face of the living Christ.

He then, with Mary and the royal Sage,
Entered the hallowed shrine of Bethlehem :
Anon, descending to the holier Cave,
Where many a chainèd cresset, from the rock
Suspended, glimmered dim o'er roof and wall,—
Long time in prayer He knelt alone, till night
Mantled the darkling sky ; and the white moon,
Now well-nigh full, her path majestic traced
Across the star-lit fields of stainless blue. 372
And when her lamp, beyond its midnight pole,
To the occident horizon veered and fell,
Still knelt He watching ; and around His soul
The spirits, to whom on the first Easter Eve
He preached repentance and new life, with those
Born in succeeding ages, and now gone
To swell the mighty catalogue of the dead,—
Came thronging ; till the very air seemed thick

With eager shadows, stretching out blind hands
To Him their Prince and their Deliverer. 382

But when the first beam of the Paschal morn
Gladdened the sky ; the band of Innocents,
Joined with the seraphs of the heavenly choir,
Before the Cave came singing, ‘ Christ is risen :
Forth from the grave He sped victoriously,
When he had paid the ransom for our souls.
Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and clap your
hands,

Ye people ; for the Lord our God to-day 390
Unbars the portals of eternal life.’

Then Jesus rose, and sate within the gate ;
Whereat the seraphs and King Solomon,
His mother too, and saintly Magdalen,
With all the white-robed Innocents, bent knee,
And offered gifts of gold and frankincense
Unto the immortal Prince of quick and dead.
Anon, once more placed in His fiery car,
With His angelic train the Lord of heaven
Northward pursued His journey through the
clouds. 400

High on the mount, whereto He urged His flight,
A mighty concourse of the chosen race
Expectant stood. Here on the topmost ridge
The eleven Apostles with the inspirèd seer,
Named Evangelic, whose prophetic voice

Told of the Man of Sorrows and His death,
 Watched with uplifted eyes, forgetting not
 The promised word, that, 'Whom they once be-
 held

Heavenward ascend, and vanish from their sight,
 Removed behind a curtain of bright cloud,—
 The same should once again, when time was
 full,

411

Come in like manner as they saw Him rise.'
 Around the hill-sides streamed a numerous throng,
 One hundred forty and four thousand, sealed
 From all the tribes of ancient Israel ;
 And the primeval heroes of our kind,—
 Noah, the first of shipwrights ; Tubal Cain,
 Who to man's uses bent the stubborn ore ;
 Jubal, the first musician ; gentle Seth ;
 Mild Isaac, and the patriarch Abraham ; 420
 And Eve, and Adam, father of our race.

Three hours they waited, gazing stedfastly
 Up into heaven, if they should chance discern
 The flaming wheels of His approaching car.
 But when the sun his midday height attained,
 Lo, in the Southern heavens a light was seen,
 Most bright, most glorious, which in blaze of
 noon

Knew not or diminution, or eclipse ;
 And trains of silvery splendour, cometwise,

Followed ; which nearer waxed, and yet more
nigh,

430

Till now the chariot of the Lord shone clear,
And all the effulgence of His heavenly host.
First Peter knew the sign ; and with loud voice
Cried out, ‘ He comes again,—the Christ of God,
By man betrayed and crucified, thrice too
(O shame !) by these unfaithful lips denied.
See how He rideth on the winds of heaven,
As once He trode the waves of Galilee ! ’

Now, downward from their track supernal
borne,

The fiery horses and the fiery car 440
Full in the midst of the Apostolic band
Lighted, upon the Mount of Olivet.
They with much joy and deep bewilderment
Circled their Master, and before His feet
With hands upraisèd knelt. As when a chief,
Homeward returning from the field of war,
Meets at the gate his wife and little ones :
Wistful at first they scan his face, but soon,
Catching the tones of his familiar voice,
Rush up, and fall upon his neck ; e'en so, 450
At first for very joy believing not,
The Apostles gazed upon their Master dear :
But when He spake, ‘ Behold, with clouds I
come,

According to My promise,' then all doubts
Fled, and the huge assembly with one voice
Hailed its Messiah.

Now, in order meet,

Adown the slope marched the triumphant host,
Right towards the sacred City. At their head
Was borne by chosen priests the Ark of God ;
Aaron, and Zadok, and Abiathar 461
Walking this side ; on that Jehoiada,
With Samuel, and the king Melchizedec.
Each wore the breastplate, bright with jewels
twelve,
The mitral cap, and ephod ; but the robe,
Broidered throughout with Eastern fruit and
flower,
And for high festival reserved, alone
On Aaron's shoulders, and on Zadok's hung.
The sacred chest, adorned with Cherubim,
Whose wings of gold above the Mercy-seat 470
Converging met, stored too with manna-cakes,
And Aaron's rod that budded, — from long
poles
By rings suspended, was discreetly borne.
Elijah next and Moses, pair august,
Bare the two tables of the Law, inscribed
By God's unerring finger. After these,
A train of Priests and Levites, habited

In sacred dress, came holding o'er their heads
The curtains of the tabernacle of God.
Followed a troop of ancient Israelites,— 480
The same, who journeying through the wilder-
ness,
Beheld the signs and wonders, wrought by God
For the deliverance of His chosen race.
Next walked the prophets,—Balaam on his ass ;
Micaiah, worn and haggard with long fast ;
Lamenting Jeremy ; and Job, who now
Saw his Redeemer, as he prophesied,
Stand in the latter days upon the earth.
Behold the rugged seer Ezekiel, 489
Who the glad tidings told, that God no more
Wreaks on the son the trespass of his sire.
See the Three Children, of undying fame,
Who, for the love they bare the Lord their God,
Braved the hot furnace ; now with eyes new-
born
They knew the Guardian of their souls, Whose
arm
Saved and upheld them through the scorching
flames.
See him, who lost not faith, nor quailed a jot,
Headlong amid the hungry lions cast,
But with his calm look, and unflinching eye
Stayed the fierce famine of their angry jaws. 500

See Jonah, who, alone of mortal men,
 Died not, engulphèd by the monstrous whale ;
 And him who told the birthplace of his King^b.
 Next came, with circles crowned of wreathèd gold,
 The kings whose hearts were perfect with the
 Lord,—

510

Josiah, glorious in his youthful zeal ;
 And peaceful Hezekiah, through whose prayer
 In one brief night, slain without sword or spear,
 Fell the huge host of great Sennacherib.
 Nor ye were absent wholly, though your brows
 With argent diadem were simpler decked,
 Young Joash, doomed too soon to royal cares ;
 Brave Jonathan, beloved of David's heart ;
 Stern Jehu, champion of the Lord ; and thou,
 Most hapless Zedekiah, whose sad eyes, 520
 Quenched by the cruel monarch's fierce decree,
 Saw not the deep shame of the land he loved.
 A dazzling train of seraphs followed next,
 Who from their golden trumpets blew a blast
 Louder, and yet more tuneful and more sweet,
 Than viol passion-fraught, clear-voicèd harp,
 Or deep-toned organ, touched by deftest hand,
 E'er sounded. And the music, which they played
 Was the great song, that English choristers
 Raise on Ascensiontide to Christ their King. 530

^b Micah.

The first notes of which heaven-born melody
Hearing, the multitude their voices joined,
And one great stream of overflowing song
Rolled from the mountain to the city's gates.
The Lord, according to John's prophecy,
Rode on a white horse, and around His brow
The Name in characters of light was writ,
'Faithful and True.' Then came the favoured
three,—

Peter, who held the keys of hell and heaven ;
John, well-beloved ; and James, whose early
blood 540
Sealed the yet doubtful triumph of the Church ;
Then all the Apostles with the elected seer.

Through the open gates the host exulting
swept,
The dusky turbaned Arabs, while they marched,
Watching them, not displeased, with quiet smile.
But, having gained the walls, they fain had
sought
The Mosque on Mount Moriah, where once
stood
Jehovah's temple, and had plucked perforce
The insulting crescent from its crowning dome.
Whereat the Lord, with arm outstretched, and
voice, 550
Heard by the uttermost of the marching throng,

Cried, ‘Who are ye, that rash and unprovoked
Seek to do violence to the friends of God ?
Turn your repentant feet to yonder hill,—
Lasting memorial of your country’s shame,—
Where He, Whom now ye honour, by your act
Was foully slain : then at the altar’s steps
Low bending, learn to adore the spirit meek
Of Him, Who bare your sins upon the Cross.’

He said ; and they, with conscious guilt
oppressed, 560
Moved towards the mournful hill ; which sacred
earth
Attaining, loosed their shoes from off their feet
The mindful twelve, and with wrapt heads
devout
Drew near the scene of their dear Master’s death.
Then to that holiest spot, and most revered
Through the wide world by every faithful soul,
Where lay the Body of the lifeless Lord,—
They pressed, silent and slow. But while they
marched
Thitherward, crept an aged man infirm 569
Into their midst, whose weather-worn attire,
Beard of prodigious growth, and crouching gait
Proclaimed him outcast from his native land,
Or pilgrim, urged by some abhorred crime
To win, thus wandering, the grace of heaven.

A long, coarse gown of russet serge wore he,
Girt with a rope ; bare to the winds his head ;
And his limbs trembled with extreme old age.
Who, mid the throng winding his way unseen,
Now stood before the Master, and with tears
Thus made his plaint ; ‘Have mercy, King of
heaven !’ 580

Have not long centuries of living death
Sufficed to purge my sin,—long centuries,
In which the waving trees, the rocks, the clouds⁵,
The very constellations of the sky
Grew ever to one fearful Shape, the Cross,
And the sad, bleeding Figure bound thereto ?
For know, good Jesus, as Thy weary frame
Toiled with its burthen up the opprobrious hill,
A draught of water Thou didst crave, which I
With hardened heart refused. This foul offence
I rued, immortal in mine own despite, 591
Through ages wandering mid the haunts of men,
Worn with disease and want, a being doomed.
But now have mercy, and give healing words,
That I may die, or truly live.’ The Lord
Bade him draw near, and touched him with His
Hand,
Whereat the deep-scored furrows of his face
Grew smooth, and all his grief, as morning-mist
Melted away beneath the Saviour’s smile.

Now at the very birthplace of our Faith, 600
E'en at the Holy Sepulchre, they stood ;—
The shrine, which many a doughty Christian
knight

Had gladly died to win. But since the throng
Was passing great, and nowise place was found,
Within the walls for multitude so vast ;
Therefore the Lord gave counsel that the kings,
Prophets, and mighty men should enter all ;
But from the people that of every tribe
Ten should by lot be chosen. With the twelve
Meantime into the sanctuary He passed ; 610
For 'twas His purpose to renew the rite,
Ordained of old in token of His death.
Himself,—as on that memorable night,
Held ever sacred by His faithful Church,—
Both brake the bread, and blessed the wine, and
spake

The consecrating words : the twelve from Him
Meekly the hallowed Elements received,
And to the kneeling people ministered.
Nor lacked the pomp and circumstance, wherewith
The later Church her rite supreme invests. 620
Gleamed altar-lights and silver lampsthroughout
Each aisle and chapel of the minster dim ;
And incense sweet, from golden censers waved
By hands angelic, heavenward seemed to waft

The prayers and praises of God's ancient race.
Then, spreading out both hands, the Lord of Life
Said words of blessing, ' Peace I leave you all ;
My peace I give you.'

Long they knelt in prayer,
Adoring their revealed and present God. 630
But when they looked again, their great High
Priest,

With all the bright-robed seraphs of His train,
Had vanished: only round the Holiest Place,
A radiant Emanation of pure light,
From the third Person of the Mystic Three,
Hovered above the sepulchre of Christ.

NOTES TO BOOK IV.

IT may be objected, as a matter of chronology, that the history of Israel is more ancient than that of Greece, and therefore that Book iv. should properly have preceded Books ii. and iii. My answer is that the spiritual empire of Israel—its commanding influence over the surrounding nations—hardly existed before the coming of our Lord ; whereas the intellectual supremacy of the Greek goes back to the age of Pericles, if not to that of Homer. My reason, however, was partly an artistic one, viz. the desire to interpose a foil between the two somewhat kindred subjects of Greece and Rome.

1 l. 2. *My frail and venturous bark.* Cf. Dante's Purg. i.
‘la navicella di mio ingegno.’

2 l. 87. *No blackest sin, &c.* I do not for a moment mean by this that punishment will be remitted until there is effectual penitence. Supposing any person to be incurably evil, his or her punishment would necessarily be everlasting.

3 l. 103. *Beard descending to his waist, &c.* The description of Moses was suggested partly by Michael Angelo's well-known statue, partly by the passage, Numbers xii. 3. ‘Now the man Moses was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth.’

4 l. 134. *Tabor's height.* I have adopted the traditional Tabor for the scene of our Lord's Transfiguration, as more familiar to the ordinary reader than Mount Hermon.

5 l. 583. *In which the waving trees, &c* These lines were suggested by the beautiful illustrations of the late M. Gustav Doré. I must, perhaps, apologize to my scientific readers for the introduction of this—as it will appear to many—merely legendary matter. But I fail to see any very broad line of demarcation between the marvellous tales of ante-Christian, and those of post-Christian times.

BOOK V.

Rome. 3.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord returns to the plain of judgment, and calls a council of the Romans. Julius Cæsar and a picked legion of republican soldiers conduct him to Alexandria, whence he is conveyed by Augustus with a Roman fleet to Naples. From Naples Trajan, at the head of an imperial legion, escorts Him to Rome.

LIKE shower of flaming meteors, which at times

Mark their bright course athwart our upper air,
The blessed angels with their sovran Lord
Traversed the Syrian heavens ; nor stayed their flight,

Till they attained the distant plain, whereon
Stood the high throne and palace of their King.
The vesper bell was sounding, and the sun,
Curtained with vermeil and with saffron cloud,
O'er the low margin of the Western sky
His head inclined ; when sudden in the midst 10
Of the yet numerous and expectant throng,

Riding with Cherubim and Seraphim
Upon the wings of the wind, appeared the Lord.
Not such to them His godlike Majesty
Had He before revealed : they therefore hailed
The gracious omen, and with loud acclaim
Welcomed again their Judge and Saviour.
He, seated on His throne of adamant,
Surveyed the diverse races, and received
The various homage of their mingled tongues.
But one word—like the spring-bird's twofold

note¹

21

Echoing o'er hill and dale, and heard above
The confused murmur of the woodland choir,—
Sounded from many voices, and outbore
The tumult of their undistinguished cries.
'Rome, Rome,' they shouted, and the heavenly
host
Caught the repeated name, and answered,
'Rome,'

Till the whole plain, and all the vaulted sky
Joyful rebellowed to that single sound.

Now from each side, as sand upon the shore, 30
Legions of stalwart men innumerable,
Bare-legged, with stout cuirass, and helmets low,
Streamed towards the Throne. Soldiers in truth
were they,

Strong men of iron hearts, and iron hands,

Schooled in the rough school, which confirms the mind

By bold exploits, and robust discipline

To the fixed counsel of one stedfast will.

O splendid Roman patience ! O firm faith,

Which neither Cannæ, nor Lake Thrasimene,

Nor strife intestine, nor the perilous smile 40
Of too-propitious fate could wholly quench :

Which by defeat grew stronger, and from loss

Reaped more abundant praise, and richer gain !

Therefore no realm, no race is quite thy peer :

Like a huge oak, which doth his roots enlace

Deep in the rocky basement of the earth,

And spreads his branches to the clouds and heaven ;

Thou, Rome, of nations queen and arbitress,

Stretchest thine arms, and castest thy broad shade

O'er the whole bounds of human history. 50

And as in regions mountainous one peak

Above the rest aspires ; whereon who stands

Sees all the giants of the snowy range,

Grouped in perspective at his feet : so thou,

Placed at the conflux of the centuries ²,

Dost from thy height of vantage comprehend,

View, and embrace all empires of all time,—

Those which were welded in thy monstrous frame,
And those born from thy womb,—thyself supreme
Of empires past, and present, and to be. 60

Soon shades of night, quick-gathering, hid
from sight

The martial pageant, and the sapphire throne
Wherefore the Master, worn with journeys long
O'er land and sea, or cleaving pathless air,
Dismissed the warlike concourse, and withdrew
Into the cloistered silence of His house.

But ere He sought the healing rest of sleep,
Three Romans,—one of the ancient line of kings,
One Consul, and one Emperor,—He called
Into His hall of council, there to hear 70
Touching the morrow's act their several minds.
Of whom first Romulus, a dark-haired boy,
Quick-eyed, with limbs well-knit, of hardy mien,
Counselled, 'that from the curies, centuries³,
And later tribes three hundred should be told;
Who, first preparing a triumphal car
To bear their heavenly Monarch, should make
way

By lesser Asia, through the Thracian plains,
Unto the head of Hadria's gulf, and thence
March to the walls of Rome.'

Then Cicero, 80

A hale old man, genial of countenance,
White-haired, with shaven face, and frank blue
eye,

Bowing in reverence to the Lord, poured forth,
After his wont, a stream of silvery words.

'Only the most illustrious sons of Rome
Should guide Thee, Lord, the world's majestic
King,

Into the world's imperious capital.

For as the strong-eyed minister of Jove⁴

Hath rule among the feathered race, so towers
High o'er the meaner cities of this earth 90
Rome's mighty head : and as the all-glorious
sun

Outshines the lesser fires of heaven, so Thou

With Thy transcendent virtue dost outvie,

Pale, and eclipse the feebler race of men.

Call then the brood of eagles from their nest,

O Sun of suns ! and let the valiant arms

Of Rome's invincible republic—arms

Which won the world, not which maintained it
won,—

Guard our Eternal Consul to His home.

For neither king nor Cæsar, but the might 100
Of freeborn citizens, (before one man
Had chased the generous mettle from their
hearts,)

Established the deep foundation, and upreared
The massy structure of our Roman state.'

Augustus last, attired in purple cloak,
With large wide-reaching temples, slender chin,
And deep-set eyes ; stern and unmoveable,—
A beardless Jove, well-framed by ruling Heaven
To awe the wayward rabble with his frown,—
Thus to the Lord of earth made gentle speech.

' Let not the fame of glorious deeds, my Liege,
Alone have honour in Thy sight : for peace, 112
Peace, equal freedom, universal law,
And even-handed justice, like soft rain,
I, and the laurelled princes of my line,
Shed o'er the lands and hearts, which owned our
rule.

Doubtless we sinned,—I, who by lawless means
Won my high seat, and those who after me
Strove to root out the seed of Christian faith.

But, once embraced, we served the cause of
Christ 120

With zeal, more stedfast than our ancient hate.
Treason against ourselves, the fountain-heads
Of all dominion and authority,
How could we choose but punish with stern
hand ?

Be not unmindful, therefore, gracious Lord,
Of those imperial soldiers, by whose aid

Rome and her sovereign magistrate became
Types of all earthly greatness.'

As he spake,
Tears of deep anguish, and divine regret 129
Coursed down the cheeks of the iron emperor.
To whom the Lord; 'Ye soared with wings
unfledged,
Cæsars of Rome, beyond the bounds of fate,
Wielding, with hands of man, the powers of God.
If then, exalted to such height, ye erred,
I deem ye punished in the gloomy fears,
Which urged you living; and the vengeful
scorn,
Which hath pursued you dead. But now, since
each—
King, Consul, Cæsar,—played his several part
In framing the huge fabric of your realm,
Let each the glories of My triumph share. 140
First, let a legion of the stout-armed men,
Who fought against the Gauls and Hannibal,
Guard me across the desert to the Nile,
And Alexander's citadel. Do thou,
Augustus, with thy loyal crews, who won
The imperial prize from sluggish Antony,
Bear me from Egypt to the Italian shore.
Next, with a thousand men, who ne'er raised
hand

Against their rightly-chosen Emperor,
Let Trajan, best and bravest of your line, 150
Meet me before Neapolis, for thence
He shall escort me to the City's gates.
Ye kings and senators of earlier fame,
Meet me at Rome.'

They heard, and went their way
Rejoicing, each to his appointed task.
No word of strife amid the ranks was heard;
For Greeks may talk; Germans may dream and
sing:

The Roman knows to conquer and obey.
Therefore, while gloom of night yet wrapped the
plain,

The great Republic's champion, Cicero, 160
Called to his side a troop of warlike chiefs,
From right to left scouring the Italian camp.
Brave Julius, bald of head, and smooth of chin,
But wearing on his large and rugged brow
A fiery force, and fearless dignity,
Which marked him king of men, with scarlet
cloak⁵

Flung o'er his harness, first the call obeyed.
Him followed Fabius, tall, broad-shouldered
slow,
True Roman hero, who by wise delays
Saved the great city in her darkest hour; 170

With Scipio, shrewd and spare,—a man of schemes,
Wrought surely, slowly planned,—who brought to bay
The Punic lion, and enticing him
From his Italian stronghold, lured him on
To final downfall in his proper lair.
These two were tribunes of the elected troop,
By Julius led: a crowd of lesser chiefs
Ordered the centuries ;—bold Manlius,
Who from the sacred hill-top thrust the Gaul :
The martyr Regulus, whose dauntless mind
Not direst torments, no, nor instant death 181
Moved from his plighted word ; Camillus rude⁶,
Uncouth of form and gesture, strong in deed ;
Pompey, long-haired, fair-featured, well-attired,
Who yet was Cæsar's best and worthiest foe ;
Curius, who first of Roman warriors
Shattered the Grecian phalanx, deemed till then
With its projecting hedge of deadly steel
Invincible ; the brave Marcellus too⁷,
Conqueror of that great city, which defied 190
Imperial Athens in her day of power.
Him not the burning mirrors, nor the mines,
Planned by the skilful Syracusan sage⁸,
Turned from his steady purpose, nor could aught

* Archimedes.

Save from his hands the last, faint Doric spark
Of Grecian genius and chivalry.

How shall I name the valiant multitude,
Well-known to fame, with many a victory
crowned,

Who swelled the ranks? —Lucullus, founder bold
Of Rome's dominion in the distant East; 200
Paullus and Flamininus, whose strong arm
Quenched the surviving might of Macedon ;
Marius and Sylla, generals of renown,
But stained by civil strife ; good Decius⁸,
Who to the gods devoted his brave soul,
So Rome might breathe free from her Samnite
foe ;

Blunt Mummius, who trailed behind his car
The immortal works of Greece, and turned the
land

Of poetry, knowledge, and the generous arts
Into a captive province? Nowise shamed 210
Mid his illustrious comrades, came likewise
The kind centurion, who beheld afar
His Saviour's crucifixion, and bewailed
The death of a Divine and Righteous Man⁹.

Beneath the quiet moonlight, clad in steel,
Bare-legged and helmeted, they gathered round
Rome's silvery speaker, and with ears intent
Drank from his lips the will of their new Lord.

Then fires of watch were kindled, and through
night,

Like the Greek host round Priam's citadel, 220
They sate in converse deep, or stood in turn,
Glad sentinels beside the sacred walls
Wherein their Master slept. 'For what,' cried
they,

'Should we, being Romans, and recovered late
From a long sleep and heavy, further need
Of rest and slumber? Come ye rather, toil,
Long marches, short repose; come earnest war,
If such His will, Who now our strength com-
mands.'

So spake they, veiling their rough loyalty
Under the mask of duty and free choice. 230
But when, slow struggling through the haze of
night,

Uprose the morn; they lifted a great shout,
And trooped, as clients at some noble's door,
Before the palace-gate, to give their Lord
The morning salutation. With the sun¹⁰
He, from His couch arising, heard the cries
And loved the allegiance of His watchful host;
Anon, went forth to greet them. Whom mid-
way

Augustus met, and with these words addressed:
'Behold, I bring Thee garments, wherewithal

Thou, by Divine Right Emperor, mayst stand
In presence of Thy faithful legionaries, 242
Clothed with the state befitting Thy degree.
Scorn not the raiment, King of gods and men,
(Albeit Thy more than mortal dignity
Need no such poor addition,) which of yore
Decked the sole masters of this headstrong
world.'

Thereat the ponderous breastplate, richly
wrought
With wingèd dragons and the Gorgon's head,
He girt before and after; bound thereto 250
The purple skirt, deep-fringed, and shod His
feet

With leathern sandals; last, around His Brow
Wreathed the fair diadem of twinèd bay:
Then, 'Hail,' he cried, 'Eternal Emperor,
Not Cæsar deified, but Cæsar God,
Hail and farewell!' Him followed Cicero¹¹,
Bearing the clustered rods, and axe of death¹²
With edge reversed: who with his aged hands
Held the brave symbols of authority,
Duly appointed, o'er his Master's Head. 260

So, as a Roman emperor crowned and
armed,
And guarded by the good old senator,
Forth to His chosen legion hied the Lord.

Soon as they saw Him, raising shields on high,
And clashing with their spears, they called
aloud,

'Ave imperator!' then with voice subdued,
As men of mortal mould, fronting their God,
Chanted, 'The Lord is King, and hath put on
Glorious apparel: yea, the Lord is King,
Clothed as a man of war, and girt about 270
With strength unto the battle.' While they
sang,

Advanced the first centurion, Regulus,
Bearing the silver bird of victory,
Who, with low reverence, at his Monarch's
feet

Laid the proud genius of the Roman arms.

Now Julius, spear in hand, and scarlet cape
Wrapt o'er his shoulders, stood forth in the
midst,

Like a true soldier, upright, frank, and brave;
And said, 'Most mighty Lord, of earth and
heaven

Sole Master! we, Thy trusty Roman guard 280
Greet Thee with joy on this auspicious morn.
Fresh feats of high emprise, new crowns of fame
We crave not from our peaceful Emperor,
But to be soldiers still, and near His Throne.
In truth the memories of our ancient deeds

Suffice us ; for our glory, like the sun,
With its abundant beams fulfilled the world.
The giant's limbs are broken, and his strength
Divided ; yet the lustre of his name 289
Still shines, as flame around each Roman head.
But what is Rome, and what this petty globe
To Thee, whose Arm Almighty spread the
heavens

With all their constellations? A poor speck
Of golden dust, shed from Thine endless store.
Ave Rex regum! Ave Pontifex!
Ave Deorum Deus!' To which the host
Answered with exultation, 'Ave Rex!
Honos, majestas, laus, victoria,
Sit Tibi in sæculorum sæcula!'

As, dominant above the carven work, 300
Buttress, and battlement, and pinnacle,
Of some huge Gothic church,—or that which
crowns

The Alsatian plain, or that which, lordlier still,
Looms o'er the low-roofed houses, and broad
stream

Of much-renowned Cologne,—the soaring spire
High out of reach in ether of its own
Reigns, a slim sister of the hills and clouds :
Or as above the dull-eyed glare of lamp,
Candle, or torch, which pierce the gloom of night

In smoke-wreathed London, calm, remote,
sublime,

310

Girt by the lesser nymphs her ministers,
Rides the fair circle of the white-robed moon ;
So, mid the bronzèd faces, and rough forms
Of Cæsar, and his steel-clad legionaries,
Shone the sweet seraphs, and the Lord of Light.
On Whom with gladness and astonishment
Gazing, the next in rank, brave Fabius,
Thus to the Master made adventurous speech.

‘ My lord O King, the road to Egypt hence
Lies through the dreary desert, and our hands
In tuning lyre or trump are little skilled. 321
What hinders that Thine angels should endue
The martial tunic, and with melody
Hearten our way ? Where God Himself is Chief,
The sons of God may follow, not ashamed.’
So Michael and his comrades, nothing loth,
Were clothed with helm and breastplate, and
took rank

As soldiers of the legion. Then the host,
Marshalled, according to their ancient use, 329
In triple column,—first the light-armed youth,
Then bearers of the heavier lance, and last
The well-massed line of stalwart veterans¹³,—
As walls of brass, mute and immovable,
Waited their General’s order for the march.

'Twas early morning still, and the fresh air
Was tuneful with the jocund minstrelsy
Of birds, who revelled in the dawn ; some clouds
Like silvery fleece, about the deeper blue
Floated transparent, but were lost in light,
Crossing the path of the bright orb of day ; 340
When, lifting with one hand the drooping sign
Of Rome's dominion, and advancing straight,
Until before the midmost rank He stood,
The Lord with lustral water purified
Legion, and arms, and standard, crying loud,
' Soldiers of Rome, in many a bloody fight
Proved mindful of your duty ! as ye served
Your senate and your general, patient still
Against all odds ; defeated, ne'er dismayed ;
So, now, I bid ye serve the Lord of Hosts. 350
Sworn slaves of duty, be ye knights of Christ.'
He spake ; and as of old to Constantine,
Appeared in heaven, with shining arms trans-
verse,

A fiery Cross, which seemed from every side
To sweep the starry hemisphere, and weave
Into the blessed symbol of our faith
The scattered splendours of the firmament.
Long time with glorious beam beneficent
It lit their upturned faces, while a Voice,
Transcending human utterance, proclaimed 360

The joyful words, ‘In Cruce salus est :
Hæc spes, hic honos, hæc sit gloria.’

The seraphs knew the Voice, and hailed the
Sign

With merry noise of shawm and dulcimer,
Singing thereto the angelic symphony,
‘Gloria in excelsis Deo.’ To which song
Marching in tune, the host, at order given,
Set forward on their journey. Not one foot
Lagged, though each warrior bare weighty
load,

(Mattock and stakes, to build a camp withal,) So did the heavenly music hearten them. 371

At night they gained the confines of that lake,
Whose waves upheld the undaunted Son of
God,

And trembling Peter: here the legion stayed ;
Built camp, with palisade and trench, four-
square,

And midmost pitched the imperial tent, wherein
Their Prætor, compassed by His valiant guard,
Might through the watches of the night have
rest.

Rising with morn, there, by the holy shores,
New born to Christ, they washed their sins
away¹⁴, 380

And pledged their unimpugnèd Roman faith

To the High Prince and Pastor of their souls.
Then by the banks of Jordan with new strength
Two days they journeyed on, 'neath shade of
palms—
High-roofed, with barren trunks, and leafy
crowns,—
Whiling away the sultry hours of noon.
But when the third day hastened to his fall,
The towers of Zion, and the gilded horns
Of Mount Moriah's crescent marked the sky,
Lit by the last glance of the westering sun. 390
Here they encamped, for 'twas the Lord's com-
mand,
'Enter ye not the city.'

Now the trench¹⁵

Was duly drawn, watch set, stakes surely driven
And all made ready for the approaching night;
When lo before the gates an unknown band
Of Romans, clad in tunics soiled and torn,
Trailing their spears, upon whose brows were
writ
Deep shame, and horror of uncheered despair !
Their chief—a dark-haired man without a
smile,—
Right humbly from the stationed sentinel 400
Craved audience of the Lord ; 'for that the
crowd

Of ignominious Romans, whom he led,—
 Their deep guilt lightened, but not all removed
 By penance long, and hell of dark remorse,—
 Now from the Lamb of God besought release
 And absolution.' When He knew their prayer,
 The Lord had pity on their lost estate ;
 And Pilate (for 'twas he, who now stood forth
 To plead his cause,) with bitter tears thus spake :
 ' Most High, Most Holy, Whom mine eyes be-
 hold,

410

No more in dim weeds of Thine earthly dress,
 But robed in strength and glory,—the Great
 Judge,

And Lord omnipotent of earth and heaven !
 No vain excuse for that I foully wrought
 Plead I : but sinning much, full sorely too
 I suffered, from man's hatred, and God's wrath.
 Alone, when now mine hour of death drew nigh,
 Into the desolate Helvetian wilds
 I wandered ; and quick climbing to the top
 Of a grim mountain, known since by my name ^b,
 Quenched in the waters of a snow-fed pool . 420
 The dim flame of my miserable life.

But neither then did mine unquiet ghost
 Find rest; but flitted round the gloomy hill,
 Vexing the wind with sighs; until the thing

^b Mt. Pilatus.

Grew scandal, and Thy priests, in zeal for
Thee,

Scaling the mount, with candle, book and bell
Exorcised me ; undoing the scant grace,
Wrought by my tears and penance. Domine,
Agnus Dei, qui tollis Sanguine 43^O

Peccata mundi, da solatium,
Miserere mei.' Wailed the mournful throng
With answering note, as when high rocks repeat
Some long-drawn funeral lamentation,
' Miserere nostri, Jesu Domine,
Miserere peccatorum.' Then the Lord,
Seeing their grief and bitter penitence,
Uttered the healing words, ' Absolvo vos
Pro potestate Meâ, in Nomine
Patris Mei, Sanctique Spiritûs.' 44^O

They heard the blessed message, and their
hearts,

Knowing the black score blotted out, grew
young,

As hearts of little children. Praise of Christ
Was all their song, as, contrite and forgiven,
Back to the desert wilds they traced their way.

With the next sun the legion journeyed on,
Skirting the bleak shores of the barren Sea,
Through Hebron to Beersheba, whence they
fared

Across the waste land, traversed in old times
By the rebellious seed of Israel. 450

Two nights in the open desert rested they ;
But on the third the lonely monastery,
Built on the rocky slope of Sinai's mount,
Received them : whence ascending to the
heights

Of the far-famèd hill, (the hornèd moon
Now riding high in heaven,) the Lord gave
thanks

Unto the King, Supreme, Invisible,
That His Eternal Purpose, dimly shown
In Law and Prophets, and made manifest
As Life and Truth in His Incarnate Son,— 460
Drew to its final consummation near.

‘ Soon with the knowledge of Thy glory, Lord,
Shall the whole earth,’ so spake He, ‘ be ful-
filled,

As waters mantle the deep ocean floor.’

Onward from Sinai to the Red Sea’s head,
Then, o’er the sand-strown and infructuous plain,
To Nilus’ banks they marched, and pitched
their camp

Over against the royal Pyramid ;
Much marvelling, that nought which mighty
Rome,

With the great world’s resources at her beck, 470

Had wrought in stone or marble, could compare
With these august memorials of the dead.

But when the golden-tressèd morn appeared,
They chose them boats, and down the fruitful tide—

Beside the cornfields, whence in ancient days
Good store of grain was garnered, year by year,
To feed the pampered Roman populace,—
Sailed to the port of Alexandria.

Now Night the shadow of her sable plumes
Spread over sea and land, and the deep sky 480
Twinkled with fitful points of starry flame ;
While round the pale horizon glimmered yet
That luminous effulgence, which outlives
The glare of Eastern day : when hove in sight,
Borne from the distant ocean, a strange fleet
With painted sails uncouth, and storied decks
Triple, and quadruple, and quintuple ;
Like citadels, by magic art unknown
Buoyed on the surface of the treacherous main.
As clouds at even, when the wind is full, 490
Are fashioned into shapes fantastical
Of castled crag, or fish, or monstrous bird ;
Or as to travellers in the Northern seas
Mountains of ice, gigantic, mist-enwreathed,
Torn from some drifting glacier, forge their way

Along the green waste of half-frozen brine ;
Such, and so huge the Roman fleet appeared.
With imaged form of swan, sea-dolphin fierce,
Or tuskèd boar each prow was carven quaint,
While on the decks, as on some high-walled
town,

500

Rose wooden towers and throng of armèd men.
High in the foremost galley, clothed in mail,
With purple cape, the second Cæsar stood ;
Who straightway urged his vessel to the spot,
Where, with bright spear-heads glimmering in
the dusk,

Waited the Julian legion with its Lord.
Seemed it as though the grains of destiny
Ran backward in Time's glass, and Rome once
more

Reigned o'er the subject nations, for huge din
Of Roman tongues sonorous filled the night ;
And forms majestic—such as, graved in stone,
Adorn the statue-peopled Vatican,— 512
Both forward pressed on ship, and lined the shore.
Far on the promontory's seaward edge
Erect, with lance uplifted, stood the Lord,
Wearing the embossèd breastplate, and the
wreath

Of empire : Him saluted with glad cries
The advancing host, and a great multitude

Casting aside their armour, flung themselves 519
Into the main headlong, and swam to land,
So they might first do homage to their King.
But He Whose heralds are the boisterous
winds,

And the proud sea His minister, Himself
Upon the waves set foot, and towards the fleet
Walked fearless ; while above His laurelled Head
Streamed, as the glories of the obscurèd moon
Skirting a cloud, the rays of Deity.

Then, having now their heavenly Emperor,
The ships, incurious of the nightly shades,
With lamps at poop and bowsprit, ploughed
their way 530

Over the starlit ridges of the deep.
Like flying dolphins, towards the Italian strand,
Driven by the breeze, they skimmed the watery
floor.

Scarce swifter run, by ardent vapours sped,
And subtle mechanism of wheel or screw,
The steel-clad giants, potent to defy
Cross-winds and adverse currents. Ere the
sun

Twice had achieved his golden course in heaven,
Crete's hilly shores and Ida's crowning height
Stood out to view ; whence sailing, in two days
They sighted the fair isle, well-known to fame,

Where Ceres dwelt, and shrewd Ulysses foiled
 The one-eyed monster. Passing then those
 cliffs,

543

Once guarded by the whirlpools of ill name^c,
 Along the Hesperian shores of Italy
 They coasted ; till at length the burning hill,
 And, like some jewel set in the blue sea,
 The lovely town of Naples fronted them.
 Hailing which sight, the Romans summoned up
 What art of music they possessed, and sailed
 With noise of brazen trump and stringèd lyre
 Into the sunlit and empurpled bay.

552

Beside the haven a new legion stood,
 Girt with blue tunics, martial of aspect,
 Led by a youth with cheeks of olive tint,
 Hair as the raven's coat, and temples wide,—
 Trajan, the warlike Spanish emperor.
 Face so courageous, and so frank withal,
 In all the Italian host was not to see.
 Happily to him—if nobleness of soul,

560

High courage, and sure virtue more avail
 Than skill, ungraced by ruth and clemency,—
 Belongs the first place in the imperial line¹⁶.
 Next him was one, in valour scarce his peer,
 But in whose milder countenance there lurked
 The fire of art and poetry. This was he,

^c Scylla and Charybdis.

Who reared the famous mole, by later hands¹⁷
Into the semblance of a castle framed,
Which o'er the yellow Tiber frowns e'en yet.
He too, his span of life now almost run, 570
Did to the soul, his body's gentle guest,
Sing a strange song, most sad, most memorable¹⁸,
As one who hoped and doubted, and yet hoped
After the tempest of this life, to win
Some dim and dreamful immortality.
Stood near these twain the Stoic emperor^d,—
Half sage, half soldier,—called by fate's decree
From the stern contemplation, which he loved,
To wield the reins of empire. As sometimes,
When a fierce storm is gathering in the south, 580
There reigns a bright and tranquil interval ;
The loud wind stays his moaning, and the sky—
An azure lake, hemmed in by towering cloud,—
Shines for a brief space, hushed in deep repose :
So, ere the mighty realm of ancient Rome
Verged to its downfall, by o'erruling Heaven
A golden age was interposed, when man¹⁹,
Guided awhile by monarchs wise and just,
Bloomed in content and glad security.
And as first tints of autumn, ere the blast 590
Tears from the trees their crimson drapery,
Outshine the livelier green of summertide ;

^d Marcus Aurelius.

E'en so the quiet eve of Rome's renown
Yet fairer seemed than her Augustan noon.

Smooth as a sea of glass the waters lay,
In colour, like the deep and lustrous blue
Of some great glacier, where a chasm divides
Its soiled and rugged surface, and reveals
The virgin crystals of the abyss below. 599
Arrayed in cloth of gold, the sun looked down
On the fair scene, and all the hills endued
Their purple mantles, shaded with deep green.
The merry citizens kept holyday,
And shoreward flocked—a various multitude,
Of either sex and every age,—to watch
The storied, antique hulls, and phantom crews
Enter the waters of their peaceful bay.
Soon as the foremost galley touched the quay,
Trajan, the new chief, from Augustus' hand
Received the sacred eagle, and raised high 610
Before his Romans, crying, ‘*Adspicite
Imperatoris signum.*’ They with joy
Hailed the dear emblem of their ancient fame;
Then with great planks of timber built a bridge
From ship to shore, and strowed thereon rich
stuff
Dyed with the rare juice of the Tyrian shell,—
Triumphant roadway for their conquering King.
He, scorning not their hospitable cares,

Set forth, and planted soon his royal Feet
On the renownèd land of Italy. 620

A group of boys, clad in the Roman garb,—
White gown with purple stripes, and amulet
Hung from the neck,—before the Master now
Knelt suppliant: unjust emperors were they,
For deeds of evil, and high powers misspent
Marked with undying note of infamy.
Now, as the memories of their former lives
Were fraught with bitterness, in childish form
Came they to plead forgiveness from their
Lord.

One was a wild-eyed lad, who seemed in
truth 630

More for a play-room fitted than a throne,
Wearing thick sandals, bound with heavy
thongs,

Whence called Caligula. With downcast eyes²⁰
He knelt and prayed, ‘O Thou who seest not
With our poor mortal vision ! pardon him,
Whose faults were fear and madness, more
than crime.

O more than sire or mother ! of Thy grace,
Him whom his mother spared not, pity Thou.
O slain Thyself by man! from wrath of man,
And doom of God, good Lord, deliver me.’ 640
Tiberius, a tall, hard-featured boy,

Dark-haired, with anxious face, more boldly
spake ;

'I ruled the world with justice : I condemned
Traitors to death : and if, as man, I sinned,
Thou canst, as God, forgive me : let my reign,
Useful to man, atone my heart's offence.'

Last of the line, and least in stature, came
A child unchildlike, with a smile unblest,—
Nero, the chief offender,—who with pitch
Smearing the harmless Christians, made them
lamps,

650

To lighten with their blaze the Roman streets.
He only said, ' Less than the least of men,
A monster, foul, detestable, am I.

Yet, where I sowed in guilt, I reaped in woe.
Thou then at length have pity ; heal my soul ;
And in Thy cleansing Water purge my sin.'

Their various pleas the Lord of mercy heard,
And to the hearts, which truly grieved, gave
peace.

Howbeit among the legion of His guard 659
No place remained for them, albeit with tears
And bitterly they sought it : ' else one meed
Would be to just and unjust, and God's ways
Err from the clear line of unquestioned truth.'
' But ye, my loyal soldiers,' quoth the Lord,
(Since home is sweet, and only there is home,

Where dear memorials of the past are strong,) Seek now the ruins of that ancient town, Lost and preserved, destroyed and saved alive By the ashen tempest from the fiery mount.'

Ere nightfall in the desolated streets 670
They halt; spread awning o'er the roofless walls,
And deck the stateliest hall with tapestry,
Wherein, on azure ground, with threads of gold
Were wrought the reign and judgment of their
Prince.

As one who, passing from this outer air
Into the depths of some enchanted caye,
Sees a new world around him, where, for sun,
The glare of torches, and, for sky, the roof
Of dim stalactite, deep-blue, crystalline,
Fills his astonished mind with rare delight ; 680
So did the Romans marvel and rejoice,
Lodged in the relics of their ancient homes.
But when the convex hemisphere of night
Closed overhead, with lamps of diverse hue
They lit the curious ways, and compassing
Their Cæsar's dwelling, sang in chorus glad,
Led by the seraphs' harps, a vesper hymn.

‘ Prince of Peace, and Star of Day,
 Cheer us, guide us, lest we stray
 From the right and royal way :
 Lumen mundi Deus.

‘ Comforter benign and blest,
 On the careworn soul distrest
 Shed the healing of Thy Rest :
 Lumen cordis Deus.

‘ GOD, All-glorious Trinity, 700
 As in heaven, on earth to Thee
 Victory, praise, dominion be :
 Deus deorum Deus !’

With the first gleam of morning they set
 forth

Along the well-known road, joyful at heart,
 Hailing each sight and sound, as voyagers
 Hail their recovered country. Virgil’s song
 Their steps enlivened, and the measured march
 Of his majestic verse, in cadence slow
 Chanted, like music of the rolling sea, 710
 Chased every thought of weariness away.
 Now ’twas the praises of their native land²¹,
 Belovèd Italy ; and now they sang
 The shepherd, who, translated to the heavens²²,

And robed in white, beheld the clouds and stars

Float at his feet, and made the shaggy hills
With his mild influence, and all nature glad.
But chiefly that high song, wherein the bard ²³
Rises on wing prophetic, and foretells
A golden age of ever-during peace,— 720
Untiring they repeated, till the rocks
Echoed the rhythmic waves of tuneful sound.

Three days they marched, now traversing the vales

Of fair Campania, now the broader plains
Of Latium ; but when, hastening to his couch,
The third sun neared the horizon, Alba's mount²⁴
And Némi's nestling lake before them lay.
They climbed the ancestral hill, and built thereon

Their nightly camp ; then, as the lingering beams
Of sunset died along the charmèd sky, 730
Watched, like the Hebrew seer on Pisgah's height,

The imperial city, with her thousand lamps,
Her aqueducts and churches, domes and towers,
Glimmer beneath the starlight and the moon.
For now they saw the heaven of their desires

The pole, towards which each faithful Roman
heart

Turns, as the needle to the frozen North.

And every soul rejoiced, and every eye

Sparkled ; and visions of the glorious past,

Made yet more bright and glorious by their
God,

740

Dazzled each heart. ‘The old iron age,’ they
sang,

‘Hath fled for evermore, and seeds of gold,

Purged throughly of their brass and mingled
tin,

Spring up and overspread the world. For Christ,
Lord of our Rome, and Sun of Righteousness,
All trace of the ancient guile shall clean annul ;
And in the might of His victorious Sire²⁵

Reigning, shall compass with His peaceful sway
The round earth, and the subject stars of heaven.’

NOTES TO BOOK V.

- 1 Line 21. *Twofold note.* Cf. Wordsworth's 'Ode to the Cuckoo,' 'Thy twofold shout I hear.'
- 2 l. 55. *Placed at the conflux of the centuries.* Roman history bestrides, as it were, the ancient and the modern world : into Rome, as Prof. Freeman has observed, the nations of the old world were poured ; out of her the nations of the new world sprung.
- 3 l. 74. *The curies, centuries, and later tribes.* There were three different classifications of the Roman people, adopted at various epochs of their history : the first, of curies, according to clans ; the second, of centuries, based upon income ; the third, of tribes, upon districts of the city and suburbs.
- 4 l. 88. *The strong-eyed minister of Jove.* Cf. Hor. Odes IV.
4. 'ministrum fulminis alitem, Cui rex deorum regnum in aves vagas Permisit.'
- 5 l. 156. *Scarlet cloak.* This was the paludamentum, worn by the general, or dux, alone. The tribunes corresponded to our Majors or Lieut.-Colonels, the centurions to our Captains. Properly, there were six tribunes to every legion ; but I have named only two, as I wished to give particular prominence to Fabius and Scipio, the two conquerors of Hannibal. The senior centurion had charge of the eagle of the legion.
- 6 ll. 182, 186. *Camillus . . . Curius.* Camillus drove the Gauls out of Rome, after the famous invasion, and induced the Romans to rebuild their city, many being inclined to migrate to Veii. He was called the second Romulus. . . . Curius finally defeated Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, first Grecian antagonist of the Romans, at the battle of Tarentum.

- 7 l. 189. *The brave Marcellus. &c.* The siege of Syracuse was the last serious conflict between the Greeks and Romans ; the issue of the subsequent campaigns with Philip of Macedonia never being really doubtful. It is remarkable that the same city, though never herself imperial, should have wrested the imperial crown from Athens, and, in a sense, have conferred it on Rome.
- 8 l. 204. *Good Decius.* There were three Romans of this name, who devoted themselves in battle for the safety of their country. The Decius of the text was the hero of the battle of Sentinum, which decided the supremacy of Rome over Samnium, and finally avenged the disgrace of the Caudine forks. On occasions of ‘devotion’ the general put on the toga, or robe of peace, and, after pronouncing a solemn form, rode with muffled head into the thickest ranks of the enemy.
- 9 l. 214. *A Divine and Righteous Man.* The saying of the centurion differs, as reported by the two Evangelists : I have combined the two versions.
- 10 l. 235. *The morning salutation.* It was the custom for dependents to appear at a Roman noble’s door, to wish him good-morning. Cf. Virg. *Georgs.* ii. 461,
- ‘foribus domus alta superbis
Mane salutantum totis vomit ædibus undam.’
- 11 l. 256. ‘*Hail and farewell.*’ ‘Ave atque vale,’ the last words of Augustus on his deathbed.
- 12 l. 257. *Clustered rods.* Bundles of rods (*fascæ*), with an axe attached to each bundle, were carried by lictors before all the principal Roman magistrates ; twenty-four before a dictator, twelve before a consul, &c.
- 13 l. 332. A Roman battle was begun by light-armed skirmishers, called at different periods *rorarii* and *velites*, who scattered their light missiles, ‘like the drops before a thunder-shower,’ and then retired. These were followed by the *hastati* and *principes*, armed originally with the long Greek

lance, afterwards with a short heavy spear, called the *pilum*. If these made no impression, the *triarii*, a body of picked veterans, advanced. I have adopted the line of battle, rather than the line of march, as more characteristic, and have made a compromise between the systems in vogue at different epochs. See Smith's Dict. of Antiqs.

14 l. 380. *Washed their sins away.* Cf. Acts xxii. 16. 'Rise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.'

15 l. 392 et seq. Those who are sceptical of mediæval legend are advised to omit the following passage.

16 l. 563. For assigning this high place to the emperor Trajan I have the authority of the poet Dante, who places him, alone (I think) of the heathen, in his Paradise.

17 l. 567. *The famous mole.* The mole of Hadrian, converted into the castle of St. Angelo.

18 l. 572. *A strange song.* 'Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,' &c.

19 l. 587. *A golden age.* In the opinion of the historian Gibbon, the age of the Antonines was the period in the world's history in which mankind enjoyed the most complete and generally-diffused happiness and prosperity.

20 l. 633. *Caligula*, literally 'Jack o' boots.' So Napoleon from his short figure and tall boots was nicknamed 'le chat botté.'

21 l. 712. Virg. Georg. ii. 136, 'Sed neque Medorum,' &c.

22 l. 714. Ecl. v. 56, 'Candidus insuetum miratur,' &c.

23 l. 718. *That high song.* Ecl. iv. 'Sicelides Musæ.' Some of the prophecies in this Eclogue bear a striking resemblance to passages in Isaiah.

24 l. 726. *Alba's mount.* Alba Longa, the ancient metropolis of the Latin race, said to have been founded by Ascanius, was built on a ridge of this hill, now M. Cavo.

25 l. 747. 'Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.' Ecl. iv. 17.

TRANSLATIONS.

- l. 295. ‘Hail King of Kings ! Hail Pontiff ! Hail God of Gods !’
 - l. 298. ‘Honour, majesty, praise, victory, be unto Thee for ever.’
 - l. 361. ‘In the Cross is Salvation. Be this your hope, your honour, your glory.’
 - l. 430. ‘O Lamb of God, that by Thy Blood takest away the sins of the world, give comfort, have pity on me.’
 - l. 436. ‘Have mercy on us sinners.’
 - l. 438. ‘I, by My authority, absolve you in the Name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.’
 - l. 611. ‘Behold the standard of our Emperor !’
 - l. 691 et seq. ‘Light of the heavens ;’ ‘Light of the world ;’ ‘Light of the heart ;’ ‘God of Gods !’
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BOOK VI.

Rome. 33.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord enters Rome in triumph, summons the Christian martyrs, and receives their homage in the Coliseum; meets the ancient kings and consuls in the temple of Concord, and proceeds to Ravenna, where He is greeted by Constantine and the Eastern emperors. He sails to Venice, and bids adieu to ancient Italy.

HOW can I render praise, or honour meet
To thee, divine of poets, Virgil dear,
To thee—beyond all minstrels of all times
Nobly melodious, and sweetly strong?
Thou, like an eagle on the scarpèd cliff
Of some great promontory, round whose base
Throbs the tumultuous and unwearied sea,
Standest apart, above the waves of time
Lifted, true image of that peerless state,
Whose birth thy song commemorates, whose
life
Thy voice outlives. The magic of thy lyre

First wooed the Muses to my humbler shell,
 Taught me to mould our rough-hewn English
 speech

Into some echo of thy strains, and wake
 The chords preludious of this cosmic song.
 Among the immortal three, whose splendour
 pales

All lesser lights in the heaven of poesy,
 Thine in my judgment is the fairest flame.
 For, like the insatiate ocean, which receives
 All waters of all rivers, swift or slow, 20
 Clear or earth-sullied, but converts anon,
 Purges, and mingles with his azure self:
 Or like thy mistress-mother, imperious Rome,
 Who took the nations in her lap, and bent
 To her own shape and liking; so dost thou
 Absorb all fainter thoughts and harmonies
 Into the measured rapture of thy string.

'Twas now the third hour of the night, and
 Christ

Slept mid the faithful warriors of His guard,
 When Virgil's shade (as mournful Hector once
 To Troy's adventurous son,) appeared in dream
 Beside the Master's couch, and thus his tale 32
 Pursued reproachful: 'King of gods and men,
 How long dost Thou forget Thy son? How long

Holdest averse Thy Face? Give ear and save,
Life of the faithful, Hope of the lost dead!
Behold, e'en now about Thy glorious Feet
Swarm, thick as stars, the heroes of our race:
But me, whose brow no martial wreath adorns,
Me, and the little band of Roman bards 40
Thou heedest not.' So spake the shade, and
knelt

With meek hands lifted at the Master's side.
But He, from sleep awaking,—swift as light,
Which from its fiery centre speeds to earth,
What time the sun-god trims his rising-lamp,—
Sought the lone monument, which midway
stands

Betwixt fair Naples and Puteoli :
For in that mouldering, moss-grown cemetery,
Amid the sweet haunts which he loved, and
near

The bordering purple of old Neptune's realm,
Slumbered the prince of Roman minstrelsy.
Thrice He the silent, solitary walls
Strook with His palm, and thrice the Lord of
life

Called Virgil by his name : the happy sprite
Heard the repeated voice, and from the tomb,
Bright with immortal vigour, as in June
Soars from its golden grave the painted fly¹,

Sprung forth ; anon, borne at the Lord's right hand

'Twixt earth and heaven, within the Roman camp,

Hard by the Prætor's tent, in soldier's garb 60
Lighted unseen.

Now Némi's waters dim

Laughed with the fresh delight of dawning day ;
Clear o'er the plain extended, lay great Rome ;
The lark renewed his matin song ; the flowers
Opened their joyous and dew-freshened leaves ;
While shout of hoarse centurion, and the blare
Of horn and bugle called the awakened host
To arms. O never, since the world took shape,
On braver ranks shone the new-risen sun !

First each industrious soldier with due care 70
Burnished to perfect lustre spear, helm, shield ;
Till the long ridges of the steel-clad hill
Glistened, as sown with ears of silver corn.

Which done, the gilded chariot they prepared,
And gown, entire of purple, broidered thick ²
With threads of gold, to gird the Lord withal ;
So He, in habit of victorious chief
Borne through the Sacred Way, might plant
His steps

On the proud Roman Capitol. Then all
Hied to their stations, and defiled forthwith, 80

Marching in ordered column, twelve abreast,
From Alba's heights down to the Tiber's
plain.

But a new marvel met their wondering eyes ;
For lo, the mighty Claudian aqueduct,
Which, like some monstrous dragon, hewn
piecemeal

By foeman's falchion, spread its scattered
limbs

Yestreen along the vale, now showed complete,
With sweep of thousand arches, marble-cased,
Stretching gigantic o'er the wide champaign.

Tell me, O grave historic Muse, whose
breath

90

Inspired the pregnant phrase of Tacitus,
And lent his rich, well-poised eloquence
To English Gibbon,—tell me, what high names
In the new legion's muster-roll had place ?
First Trajan, chief ; Aurelius, Hadrian,
Tribunes ; then Titus, first centurion,—
Titus, the darling of the world, too soon
Torn from the people's midst, which loved him
well.

'Twas he who built Rome's hugest monument,
Since called the Coliseum, then designed 100
For games and combat fierce 'twixt man and
beast.

Full many a Christian there, in after times,
Witnessed for Christ, cementing with dear
blood

The slow foundations of our Holy Church.
Therefore the mindful Pastors of His flock
Planted with shrines the fatal sand, wherein
Prayer might be duly said, and praises sung
For all the blessed martyrs, who there fell.
He likewise wreaked upon the faithless Jews
Heaven's tardy chastisement, and haled to
Rome

110

Relics most precious of Jehovah's fane.

Aurelian led the second century,
Upright, severe of manners, warrior brave,
Who for five years to Rome's decaying state
Brought back the glories of her honoured prime.
Vespasian with good Nerva marched the next ;
Then gentle Antoninus, than whom king
Ne'er governed realm more blameless or more
just ;

Next Diocletian—mighty prince—who first
Bare on his Roman brows an Eastern crown ; 120
First too of sovereign rulers, unconstrained,
Shook off the burden of his state, and died
A simple citizen. Yet higher place
Perchance were his, but stain of Christian blood
Tarnished the scutcheon of his kingly fame.

The two last centuries lacked a Roman chief;
To these the Scourge of God, proud Attila,
And he who found right royal obsequies
In a swift river, from its native bed
Diverted for the nonce,—great Alaric, 130
Lord of the Goths,—as captains were assigned.

The seraphs marched in front, with horn and
lute

Making glad melody, while deeper tones
Of soldiers' voices joined their chorus strong,
Chanting, 'Te Deum laudamus : nobilis
Urbs Roma, caput rerum, laudat Te :
Te senatorum gens, Te Cæsarum
Cohors illustris : Te clarissimus
Miles, invictus per tot sæcula,
Salutat.' Then, recurring to the strains 140
Of their own poet, 'Enter now,' they sang³,
'(The hour has come) Thy glorious heritage,
Child of the Gods, bright offspring of great
Jove !

See, the wide universe in worship bends
Before Thee: earth, deep ocean, and broad
sky

Confess Thy Godhead, and all nature hails
The dawning æon of eternal joy.'

Thus sang they, treading the great Appian
Way,

Where, ranged profuse in venerable line,
The sepulchres of their forefathers stood. 150
Soon on their ancient walls they gaze entranced,
Then on the porch, whose august barrier
Full many a consul, laden with war's spoils,
Had crossed triumphant. Near this selfsame
gate,

If ancient tale speak truly, Peter once—
Peter, first bishop of the Roman church,—
What time the persecution fiercely burned,
Essayed to fly, fainthearted. Whom the Lord,
Bearing His old Cross, as on Calvary's hill,
Met in the way ; and to His fearful saint, 160
Who wondering cried, ‘Quo vadis Domine?’
With mild rebuke made answer, ‘Romam eo,
Cruci figendus iterum.’ Then (so runs
The legend) Peter knew his ancient fault,
Spurned life, and back to Rome and martyr-
dom

Hastened repentant. Now with wreathèd flowers
The porch was gay, while thronging senators,
Clad in long, flowing robes of snow-white
fleece

Bordered with purple, waited to receive
The world's Dictator. Onward through their
midst, 170
Hailed by the white-haired Fathers of the state,

With triumph swept the brave procession ;
Now 'twixt the Cœlian and the Palatine
Entering the Sacred Way, now winding up
To the far-famèd Roman Capitol.
And lo, as Heaven's high Sovereign rode by,
Arch, temple, colonnade, and vaulted hall
(As when the dry bones, by the prophet once
Seen in the valley of Jehoshaphat,
Put on new flesh, touched by the breath of God),
Rose from the dust of ages, and endued 181
The varied grace of their rich, antique dress ;
Till, when He reached the crowning hill, ap-
peared,
In mighty panorama stretched below,
The full magnificence of ancient Rome.
This was the heir of all preceding time,
The mighty stream, into whose gulf were poured
Wealth, splendour, art, renown—the amassed
store,
Earned by the labours of two thousand years.
This was through ages long the heart of the
world⁴, 190
Whose throbs vibrated to earth's farthest end ;—
The vast imperial City, which surveyed,
On her seven hills enthroned predominant,
Fall'n empires, vanquished realms,—a world her
own.

Here was the Roman Forum, a bright field,
Sown with the marble spoils of captive Greece ;
Here was the circus, yonder on the height
The massive shrine of Capitolian Jove.
Hard by, sublime upon his airy shaft,
Trajan, in mimic show, drew after him 200
The wreathèd figures of his Dacian train ;
While, like some hollowed hill, crowning the
vale,
Stood the colossal amphithéatre,
Now rounded and complete, and gleaming
bright
With slabs of polished marble. On all sides
Baths, temples, porticoes, and palaces,
As gems inlaid, encrusted slope and dell.
'Twas now midday, and the blue vault of
heaven,
Chequered with golden lace of glistening
cloud,
Above the Eternal City brooding, shed 210
The benediction of its tempered smile.
Therefore the soldiers, hearkening to their
Lord,
Through market, lane and street went divers
ways ;
Bought them of bread, fruit, wine, to serve
their need ;

Then in the wide square, which o'erhangs the Rock^a,

Waited His word. Two reverend men meanwhile,

Attired in scarlet, mounted the hill-steps,
And sought the imperial Presence. Brow and breast

Three times, in token of their faith, they signed
With the most holy Cross; then one made speech:

220

'From him, who, seated in great Peter's chair,
Reigns o'er the visible Church, and wields the keys

Of hell and heaven—we come ambassadors.

Thus saith the sovereign Pontiff, "Art Thou He⁵

For Whom we wait? And doth the widowed Church

At length behold her Master? For, in truth,
Great signs and wonders, such as have not been

Since the day sickened at the Saviour's death,
Attest Thee mightier than of mortal flesh.

Speak then, O Son, or Angel, of high God! 230
Why is the shrine of Christ left desolate?

Wherfore in this Thy city rise the fanes

* The Tarpeian Rock.

Of heathen gods,—Mars, Saturn, Vesta, Jove,—
Demons, long since dejected from their seats,
And well supplanted by Thy saving Cross ?
What means this host of pagan warriors,
Wherewith Thou art encompassed ?” Said the
Lord,

‘ Christ hath His servants not in those alone,
Who were of old baptized into His Name.

The just and merciful of every race⁶ 240
Are sons of God, and numbered in His flock
Who is the Shepherd of all faithful souls.
Say, ye who held the Oracles of God,
Loved ye your duty, as these Romans loved ?
Nay, for a fire burnt in their hearts untaught,
Which shames your Christian virtue. Furthermore

These, in their long and unsubstantial home,
Both much have learnt, much borne, and much
unlearnt

Of vain tradition. For the spirit of man,
Freed from earth’s bondage and the chains of
flesh, 250

Sleeps not ; but wanders round the home it
loved ;

Learns from the faults of others how itself
Transgressed or erred ; watches the fierce debates,

Wars, revolutions, tumults, heresies,
Which pass, like shifting scenes, o'er the world's
stage.

But lest ye grieve, beholding heathen feet
March in the wake of your returning Christ,
Know that to Christian Rome, when time is
full,

With warrior, priest, and saint I come again.
Meantime, possess your souls in patience: 260
For I, the Lord, am mindful of Mine own.'

So spake He, comforting; and they made
speed

To Tiber's further shore, where dwelt in state
The sovereign priest of the great Latin Church.
Thereat the Lord gave blessing, and His host
Took bread and flesh, and cheered their hearts
with wine.

When all had drunk and eaten, ' Go your ways,'
The Master said, ' and let your Roman eyes
Feast on the dear haunts, and familiar scenes,
Where in old times ye wandered. But when
Day 270

Resigns his throne, and Night's pale arbitress
Kindles her lantern in the glimmering East;
Hither return with torches, for I go
To meet the Saints, who witnessed for My
Faith

In the great théâtre, which yonder lies.'
He said, and gladly they His word obeyed :
As, when the frosts break, and vivacious spring,
Robed in bright azure, crowned with gold o'
 the sun,
From winter's cold embrace laughs himself
 free ;
Forth fly the birds and bees, and every flower
Bares its pink petals to the glad sunshine. 281
Only the Mantuan at his Master's side
Lingered, like Israel's prophet, on that day
When God removed Elijah from his head.
Therefore they twain, descending from the Hill,
Sought the renownèd pulpit, whence of old
Proud consul, and bold tribune moved to peace,
Or roused to war the freeborn citizens.
Here standing, many a dear and glorious shade
By name He summoned ; Horace first of all—
Good, kindly, graceful Horace, whose sweet
 songs, 291
Wrought with that subtlest art which hides
 itself,
Bloom for each age afresh—the boy's delight,
The statesman's solace, and the scholar's joy.
Then Tacitus—tall, beardless, pale, severe,
Around whose close-set lips and forehead high
Played the cold splendour of his searching wit :

No tongue than his more potent to chastise
Madness and crime, nor shrewder to detect
The dark hypocrisies, which awe mankind. 300
Then Juvenal—of satirists, which are
Or have been, prince : then sad Lucretius,
Half tuneful sage, half philosophic bard.
Catullus next—whose light and artful hand
Wove gossamers, and tipped their webs with
gold.

Last Livy,—grave historian, whose quick pen,
Ne'er sinking, seldom soaring, told the tale,
From what beginnings, and by what sure steps
Rome won her vast dominion, and at length
With adamantine chain enclosed the world. 310

With these, and others of less glorious name
The Master held sweet converse, traversing
Temple and circus, street and colonnade,
While the light-hearted Horace walked His
guide.

Now He admired the dome, whose ample
round ^b
Not Peter's loftier and much-vaunted pile,
Nor Paul's in London, nor the buttressed shape,
By Brunelleschi's art in Florence reared,
Equals ; anon the baths luxurious,
Marble-encrusted, with mosaic paven, 320

^b The Pantheon.

And brave with pictured heroes and the gods,
Which Caracalla's wayward wit designed.
Now Titus' arch triumphal, now He praised
The graceful pillars of old Saturn's fane,
And that, where glimmered Vesta's holy fire.
But, day declining, a high feast was served
Within the Cæsars' palace ; where the Lord
Took meat, (as kind Augustus, in old times,
Placed betwixt sighs and tears), with Virgil
here⁷,

And Horace there reclining at His side. 330
A roasted peacock, with its plumage trimmed,
As was the Roman use, adorned the board ;
And true Falernian, such as Horace loved.
Mellow with years, ripe-flavoured, ruddy red,
Sparkled in cups and goblets of pure gold.

Now all had supped, and praise was rendered
meet

Unto the God of grace, Who loves alike
Greek genius, Roman virtue, Christian faith :
Whereat, electing from the assembled throng
Virgil alone, and from His seraph-train 340
Uriel, and Michâel, and Raphâel,
The Master, armed with torch and taper dim,
Hied him, a pilgrim, to those darksome lanes,
Hewn in the living rock, which many a mile
Their strait and labyrinthine web extend

Beneath the City's outskirts :—not more sad,
Nor thicklier veiled in night old Pluto's realm,
Whither, as poets sing, the mournful shades
Of Greek or Roman, lightened of their flesh,
Trooped, by the potent wand of Hermes led.
Here through long centuries, on their rocky
shelves

351

Laid side by side—their faces Eastward turned,
So best to welcome their returning Lord—
Slept the beloved of Christ: within these
vaults,

Shunning the ruthless rage of heathen Rome,
Long years they dwelt, the living with the dead.
In after times, when the victorious Church
Raised high her head, and many a gorgeous
shrine,

Made rich with trophies of the vanquished gods,
Rose to the once despisèd Son of Man ; 360
Borne were the sacred bodies with due rites
From their obscure sojourn, and gently laid
In church or minster, which new grace received,
Built o'er the relics of a martyred saint.

Now in their subterraneous homes, once more
Each in his niche, they rested ; till the Lord,
Breathing the breath of life, should call them
back

From shades of death into His realm of bliss.

Through the dark, winding crypt with reverent steps 369

The Master pressed, and after Him the Saints
Thronged, from their cells arising, at His voice.
Soon the strait way grew wider, and disclosed
A vaulted space, where in distressful times
They met to commune with their absent Lord,
And share the dear memorials of His death.

Here with loud Voice, thrice uttered, every soul,

Who for the Faith had witnessed with his blood,—

Whether by fire consumed, or slain by sword,
Or in the arena torn by noisome beast,—

He summoned; then, returning whence He came, 380

Mounted the gloomy staircase, and emerged
Under the wide and cheerful vault of heaven.

The sun had set, and purple mists of night,
Crossed by dim bars of horizontal fire,
Mantled the sky; but neither had the moon
Yet shown her silver face. Therefore the Lord

Waited till moonrise on the terraced walks,
Which skirt the hill-side of the Palatine.

But Uriel climbed the battlements, and stood
Into the far East gazing, till what time 390

Heaven's faithful witness should her lamp reveal.

'Watchman, what of the night?' the Master cried.

'The stars are high in heaven, the West is gray;

Eastward I see no sign,' the seraph said.

Once more the Lord made question, 'What of the night?'

'The stars grow wan,' said Uriel, 'the pale East

Shivers, but yet no moon.' 'The time is near,'

He answered, 'come thou down.' So Uriel came,

And straightway, for the well-wrought purple cloak,

In garment of pure white—with letters gold
Wrought scroll-wise round the edge,—arrayed
his Lord ;

And with a gem-bound fillet girt His Brow,
Whereon this Name was written, '**ΒΑΣΙΛΕΤΣ**
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΩΝ'

Then, on a white horse seated, Christ the King

Into the forum rode.

The square was filled

With a great multitude, in raiment white,
Palms in their hands, and crowns upon their
heads.

Above, the Capitol seemed all afire ;
So blazed the sky with torches, from the host
Which thronged the sacred hill. Meanwhile
uprose,

411

Curtained in golden mist, the expected moon ;
Whereat the blissful martyrs raised forthwith
Voices exultant, 'Worthy is the Lamb
Dominion, power, might, worship to receive :
Who loved us well ; Who with His priceless
Blood

Cancelled our stains ; Who made us kings and
priests

To God Most High, Which reigneth evermore.'
Now, with their silver bird raised in the van,
Bristling with spears, and harnessed with bright
steel,

420

Marched from the height the imperial host. A
torch

Of flaring pinewood to each spear was bound,
So that the legion, like some burning wood,
Was wrapped in smoke, parted by tongues of
flame.

Before them loomed, half brightness and half
shade,—

As ebon, matched with gleaming ivory,—
Moon-shadowed and moon-lit, the cavernous
Mountain of bricks and marble, in whose midst
Mid jeer and scoff from the rude, pampered
throng,

Full many a Christian martyr won his crown.

Within the vast and venerable walls 431
Streaming, the men took place; the white-
robed saints

Along the rising tiers of benches ranged;
The soldiers in the arena; Christ Himself,
Encompassed by His angels, high enthroned
Upon the o'ercanopied and cushioned chair,
Where once the laurelled emperors held state.

Ancient of Days, Jehovah, Lord Supreme,
Who, girt with sphere of elemental light,
Hast for Thy diadem the stars of heaven, 440
The clouds Thy chariot, the sky Thy robe,
And the green earth a carpet for Thy Feet!
And Thou, primæval Soul of things, from Whom
Love, justice, and each godlike attribute
Of the human heart, as from a living fount
Perennial, flows and springs! be with me now
And with Your potent inspiration
Uphold the flagging pinions of my song,
So I may rightly speak what next befel.

The huge theatre, with its breathing freight,
Lay naked to the sky, which overhead 451
Brooded—an arch of sapphire, sown with gold.
And now the quire of seraphs, harp in hand,
Began the melody, which of mortal sounds
Best speaks the measured ecstasy of heaven,
God's triumph, and the victory of His Christ :
Crying, ' Alleluia, Alleluia ' :
For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth :
 King
Of Kings : and Lord of Lords : and He shall
 reign
For ever and ever.' As the final notes 460
Of the angels' harps and voices rose to God,
Behold, the heavens stood open, and Himself
The Eternal Father, robed in dazzling light,
Yet clear in Face and Feature, like the Son,
Unveiled His glorious Presence.

Have ye seen

The light, which mantles some snow-crownèd
 peak
Far off, when all the vales beneath are gray ?
Such calm and distant Splendour filled His
 Face.
Or have ye watched the smile ineffable,
Which o'er the features of some dying saint 470
Passes, when Death is near, and the rapt soul

Catches a glimpse of heaven before the time ?
So mild and radiant was the Smile He
wore.

It is a joy, few earthly joys surpass,
To gaze upon the face of some great man,—
Soldier, or prince, or poet,—on whose fame
Our silent hearts long time have dreamed and
dwelt.

What bliss, then, past compare must these have
known,
Who through the curtains of unclosèd heaven
Beheld the Immortal Being, by Whose Will
All things from the beginning are and were ?

But soon the Rays waxed paler, and that
Form

482
Of Light transcendent, like the sun's bright
head

Entering the realms of night, retreated slow
Far and more far into the chasm profound.
Then, like that gentle planet, which succeeds
Into the sun's place, and controls the night,
As he the day,—a new and younger Shape,
Bright with the unclouded innocence and
grace

Of some fair boy, on whom the naughty world
Hath left no impress yet of guile or sin, 491
Came seated on a rainbow, and above

The assembled concourse floated. Wings He had

Dovelike, of silvery sheen ; and in His Face
Peace, Love, and every gracious attribute,
With Wisdom, last and best of Heaven's gifts,
Shone ; as on mountain lake the quiet stars.

Silent and prone in adoration bent,
The Saints and soldiers hearkened, if perchance

Some Voice from the excellent Glory should proceed. 500

Howbeit no sound was uttered, nor voice heard ;
And soon the Incarnate Splendor, like the first¹⁰,

Soared upward, into the heaven of heavens received.

Then, as the last gleam of that wondrous Light

In the blue distance melted ; Virgil rose,
Bearing in hand a seraph's borrowed harp ;
And sang in loud and stately monotone
Before the imperial seat this hymn of praise.

' Be Thou exalted, Lord Most High,
Mysterious, Triune Deity !

Who to our poor and erring race
Hast deigned to show Thy Very Face.— 510

' Three persons in One God Supreme !
From Whose Tripartite Essence stream
All good things in the heavens and earth,
All thoughts of right, all deeds of worth.—

' Mighty Creator, King Sublime,
Beyond all space, before all time ;
Dear Jesus, born to save and bless ;
Sweet Spirit of love and holiness :—

520

' Great Father, Saviour, Holy Ghost !
To-night, with all the heavenly host,
Our voices and our souls we raise,
To laud Thy love, and sound Thy praise.'

Which hymn with joy repeating, the vast
throng,

Firm in the faith, and with good hope inspired,
To camp or city went their several ways.

But on the morrow, when the sun was high,
Robed in a gown entire of scarlet grain,
As Prince and Censor, (Virgil going before ¹¹)
With Trajan, Horace next with Hadrian,
Then Tacitus and Titus—lictors six 532
Bearing the rods and axes,) Christ once more
Scaled the triumphal hill ; and plied His steps
Towards that shrine of Concord, where of old

Sat the wise Council of the Roman state.
 Whom at the porch the assembled senators
 Greeted with grave salute ; and through the
 ranks

Of kings and consuls to the curule chair
 Led Him. Then, somewhat loth, (for Roman
 use) 540

Abhorred the subject knee,) they slow advanced,
 Singly to render homage to their Prince.

The Master read their doubt, and rising spake ;
 ' Men, Romans, Conscript Fathers, give me not
 Knee-service : where the heart no worship yields,
 There knees are bent in vain : the just and
 true

At God's own Throne may stand without
 rebuke.

Therefore, each resting in his place, as erst,
 When your republic, strong in arms, and wise
 In counsel, ruled herself, and awed the world,—
 Tell me, what impulse, or what dire disease 551
 Urged from its sovran place your mighty state ?
 How, being arbitress or mistress once
 Of the whole earth, fell it by slow degrees
 A prey to warlike Hun and artless Goth ?'

Then Cato—a gaunt man, with short red hair,
 Stern and uncouth of gesture,—thus made
 speech :

'O Prince, (such title law nor use forbids)
Prince of the senate ! know that, freedom lost,
Rome lost herself: with tyranny the plagues
Monstrous, abominable, of sloth and vice 561
Gnawed, like twin vultures, at her noble heart ;
Till a new race of freemen purified
The blood degenerate of her worthless sons.'

To whom Agrippa, chosen minister
Of great Augustus, thus spake answering words :
'A virtuous state by freedom is made strong ;
But where the citizens to virtue's law
Own not allegiance, then more potent hand
Must curb the lawless license of their hearts :
Since freedom is to such, as pearls to swine.
Had Cato's will prevailed, our Roman realm,
Torn by dissensions from within and foes 573
Without, had tarried not a thousand years
To achieve her ruin. Fear of God is best ;
Then honour of the king : if these are not,
No longer right and reason, but blind rage
Usurps the imperial sceptre, and soon turns
What was a state's fair order to the strife
And furious riot of untamèd beasts. 580
Therefore my judgment is, that mighty Rome
Fell, not by freedom, but by virtue, lost.'

Then rose a mild and venerable wight,
Sceptre in hand, who wore a stripèd robe,

Part purple, and part white,—the second he
Of the ancient line of kings ; a man much
versed

In divination, and those rites obscure,
Wherewith the Latin tribes were wont to soothe
The wrath or envy of their warlike gods.

‘O King,’ said he,—‘for less than royal rank
In truth accords not with Thy Name of God,—
True ’tis, that freedom blesses those alone, 592
Whose souls are fed by virtue ; true that Rome,
Her virtue gone, lost all : but wherefore fled
The manly spirit and patient zeal for right,
Which made her queen of nations ? E’en be-
cause,

Through her unbounded sway made arrogant,
She waxed unmindful of her ancient rites.

The gods, the gods neglected dragged her
down

To headlong ruin. For belief in Heaven, 600
Mixed though it be with error, yet is good :
Who fears no god, but not who fears amiss,
Out of Thy mouth Thou spuest.’ Thus he
spake,

And lowly kneeling at the Master’s feet,
Proffered his homage.

Then the rest, abashed,
Came forth, each from his place, and bent before

The imperial Censor. Who, when all had knelt,

After this wise bespake them : ‘Men of Rome,
Consuls, dictators, prætors, censors, kings !

Good cause and weighty have your several words

610

Assigned for Rome’s decline ; but deeper yet
Was the prime source of ill, and more removed
From mortal knowledge. For the Most High
God,

Who made the world, and peopled it with tribes

Diverse in colour, face, and form and speech,
Did to each race its special part allot
In the execution of His vast Design.

In these the mind, in those the will He formed
Preëminent : these laid bare the hidden laws
Of man’s mysterious being ; those acquired
Power and supreme dominion o’er mankind.

But His peculiar lore He gave in trust
To a third people, else of small repute ;
That so the seed divine, unchoked by weeds
Of earthborn science, or the thorny growth
Of worldly, hard ambition, might take root
In kindly soil, and waxing to a tree,
In time appointed the whole earth o’erspread.
This Tree of Life, O Romans, with wide roots,

And branches high, outgrew the stately shrubs
 Of your laborious garden ; this dissolved 631
 Your empire. Nor availed the engrafted sap
 Of Christian faith, wherewith great Constantine
 Renewed the withered trunk of heathendom,
 Nor the new capital, nor the altered tongue.
 Rome fell before a Power stronger than Rome.
 Her laurelled Cæsars and imperious gods, 637
 Like Pharaoh's horsemen in the Red Sea waves,
 Sank, humbled by the STRENGTH OF ISRAEL¹²,
 Made manifest as Word, and Love, and Will
 In His Incarnate Son.'

Having thus said,

The Lord dismissed the assembled senators ;
 Then, from the temple issuing, called again
 The imperial legion, whom He thus addressed
 From the high terrace of the central hill :
 ' Soldiers, centurions, tribunes, emperors !
 Now is achieved My purpose, and the task,
 For which I sought the Queen of History.
 But ere I quit your walls, and bid adieu
 To her who ruled the lands, and shaped the
 times, 650
 Ye and your sires I honour and extol
 For that your minds contrived, your wills re-
 solved,
 Your patience and strong zeal accomplished.

In the fulfilment of God's high Design
A noble part ye Romans bore, perchance
Of all the noblest. From imperial Rome,
As rivers from their fountain, spring derived
The titles, signs, and attributes of power,
Which are the glory of all succeeding realms.
Your conquering emblem, and your Cæsars'
name

660

Ye to the Christian Kaisers have bequeathed ;
The lords of Islam wear your majesty
And deep, unmoved, impenetrable calm ;
Your City, with her high traditions
Of world-wide empire and authority,
Hath fallen a portion to the sovereign Popes ;
Your patience and your spirit invincible
To the English. But the world will nevermore
See, knit together in one nation's grasp,
The vast prerogative of your ancient sway. 670
Farewell, great Rome, who barest, Atlas-like,
On thy broad shoulders this majestic world ¹³ :
Great Mother of the nations ! fare thee well.'

As thus He spake, the legion raised a shout,
Loud as the triumph of victorious host,
When fall the walls of some besieged town.
Horse then and chariot, at their King's behest,
They with all speed equipped ; for now His
road

Lay towards Ravenna, by the further sea.
 There Constantine, with his unwarlike brood
 Of Eastern Emperors,—well-born, well-taught¹⁴,
 Strong in the faith ; yet fearful and unwise,—
 Once more should greet Him. Therefore, when

high noon

683

Now verged towards sunset, through the Colline
 gate

The angelic squadron with their heavenly King
 Passed ; and quick traversing the Etruscan
 plains,

Arrived with nightfall at Lake Thrasimene,
 Where in old times the Punic leader bold
 Vanquished Flaminius and his Roman host.
 Here on the confines of the ill-omened lake
 They pitched the imperial tent ; but thence with

morn

691

Fared onward, till the gulf of Adria
 Showed to their left its belt of gray and blue.
 Soon, in faint prospect mid her girding swamps,
 Appeared Ravenna, city of the past,
 Where great Theodoric reigned, whence afterward

The Cæsars of Byzantium long maintained
 Their shadowy rule o'er severed Italy.

Forth from the gates rode mighty Constantine,
 First Christian emperor, his brows adorned

700

With diadem of pearls and gold ; hard by
Came Theodosius, champion of the faith,
Who smote the rising power of the Goths, and
swayed

With undivided sceptre West and East.
Beside him, versed in statecraft more than
 arms.

Compiler of the vast and stately code
Of Roman jurisprudence, builder too
Of that great dome, mother of mosques to be,
Which, in her strong, august antiquity,
Shines mid her fairest daughters fairer still,—
The last great emperor, Justinian, stood. 711

Next to the kings the Christian patriarchs,
Mitred, with cope and crozier, alb and stole,
Greeted their Master. Foremost of the throng
Bold Athanasius, whose undaunted voice
Availed against the world; and Chrysostom,
Whose golden words, where English speech is
known,

Sound last at matins and at evensong ;
And saintly Basil, with the warlike priest
Ambrose, first psalmist of the Christian Church,—
All these, with bent knee, and raised eyes
devout.

Knew the consummate Splendour, and rejoiced
In the full Vision of the Word made Man.

At length outspake imperial Constantine :
' Be not ashamed, Lord Jesus, to receive
The homage of Thine own baptized kings.
To reign unquestioned o'er the prostrate world,
To spare the subject, and subdue the proud,—
Such fame, such height to few of our long line
Heaven granted. But within our dwindled
realm' 730

Some part, not unbefitting our high name,
For these thy lateborn children yet remained.
Through us the Church of Christ, oppressed
long time
By divers persecutions, took new strength,
And triumphed o'er her foes: through us the
Cross,
Till then despised, became the supreme sign
Of earthly power and sovereignty; through
us

The unruly sects were vanquished and dis-
persed,
Who dared deny Thine equal Deity¹⁵.

We too, in times of ignorance, preserved 740
The priceless gems, else lost for evermore,
Of Greek and Roman wisdom. Think no
scorn

Therefore, good Lord, of our diminished sway,
Our sounding titles, and our altered tongue.

Behold, in yonder palace stand the throne,
The roaring brazen lions, and the birds¹⁶,
Whose metal throats made wondrous melody :
There is the lofty crown, and there the robes,
Crowned wherewithal the princes of our line
Held court, took homage, or gave audience. 750
Assume, if such Thy will, these emblems brave
Of royal majesty.'

But ere the Lord

Made answer, he who boldly spake for God,
When Christian doubt, and heathen subtlety
Menaced the new-built citadel of truth,—
Cried, ‘ Nay, these childish symbols ill befit
Him, Who esteemed the lilies of the field
More than the royal pomp of Solomon :
For in the clear light of His searching eye
None but the true, and nought but truth can
live. 760

“ Who may abide His day ? ” so wrote the
seer,
(“ For He is like refiner’s fire) and who
Shall stand when He appeareth ? ” So he
spake ;

And every patriarch and crownèd prince
Gave to his words assent : whereat the Lord
Called Athanasius to his side, and said ;
‘ Yonder in Saint Vitale’s shrine I hold

A Council of My Church : go thou before,
 And deck the temple as is meet, and wait 769
 My coming on the threshold, with thy peers.'
 He therefore went forthwith, and duly ranged
 Great chairs of state about the furthest apse,
 This way and that way ; reared a lofty throne
 Right in the midst, and crimson carpets spread
 From porch to chancel o'er the marble floor :
 Tapers he lit likewise, in memory
 Of rites held darkly mid the vaults of Rome ;
 Then with his train went forth to meet the
 Lord.

Before him walked three princes of the
 realm,
 Attired in purple, Constantine the first, 780
 Bearing the sacred banner, crowned with CHI¹⁷
 For Christ,—a silken square, whereon was
 wrought

In threads of gold the dear Redeemer's Head ;—
 Next Theodosius bare the Crown of thorns¹⁸,
 Worn by the Master ; last Justinian
 Held a rich jewelled casket, which enshrined
 True reliques of the wonder-working Cross.

Through the long nave in glad procession
 Marched mitred priest, and royal acolyte,
 Chanting sweet psalm and solemn litany. 790
 And now 'Te lucis ante terminum,'

And now the 'Splendor Gloriæ' they sang,
Now with united voice the Symbol raised
Of Christian faith,—that Apostolic named,
Or that Nicene, or that which bears the
style

Of Alexandria's valiant patriarch,—
Till with their fervent praise the temple's
walls

Seemed to dilate, and the great roof to soar
Upward, and every lattice to grow bright
With flames of jasper and of emerald : 800
As when at dead of night the belted clouds
Sometimes dispart, and the huge vault of
heaven

Opens its azure depths unfathomable,
Lit by the pale moon and the constant stars.
Three shadowy pageants likewise did appear,
Which from afar, like armies on the march,
Towards the midmost temple filed their way
Triumphant ; these in scarlet, those in blue,
The last in white robes were apparelled fair.
Three branches they of the great Mystic
Vine, 810

Whose leaves do compass and enfold the
world,—

Three limbs, sometime divided, now made
one,

Compacted and well ordered, in that Frame,
Whose Head and Heart is Jesus Christ our
Lord.

Therefore, elect from all the centuries
And all the lands, hither they thronged to-
day,—

Pope, Bishop, Saint and Patriarch,—to hail
The auspicious nuptials of His Bride the
Church.

Like dust of stars, which pave the Milky
Way,

They streamed, an endless host, and like to
stars, 820

Shone the long, waxen tapers, which each
saint,

Figuring the One True Light, in hand up-
bore.

Say, Spirit of God, Who with Thy sevenfold
gift

Didst on the birthday of the Church inspire
The chosen Twelve, Thine emissaries,—say
Who, mid that noble army nobler still,
Marshalled their several ghostly companies?
Peter, with crownèd head, and cross reversed
Wrought on his raiment, led the Roman band;
The Greeks by holy John; the younger
Church 830

Was ruled by James the brother of the Lord.

'O joy beyond all hope and past compare !'
So sang they with one voice, 'O realm of Christ

Now seen and known ! O dream of Christendom,

Flashed into form and sober truth at last !
Creator Spirit, Whose unseen influence,
Upholding, consecrating, purifying,
Hath wrought this blissful, complete unity,
Grant that we hold Thy perfect Peace, nor lose

The costly jewels of our hard-won Crown.' 840
Meanwhile beneath the star-worked canopy,
O'er His own Church presiding, sate the Christ.

But twilight now waxed deeper, and dim night,

Quick-falling, brooded o'er the purple gulf.
Therefore, when vesper prayers were duly sung,
The Lord Himself gave benediction
With arms outspread ; and o'er their heads invoked
The Father's gift of Life, the Saviour's Love,
And His own Peace from God the Comforter.

Then with His heavenly train He sought the
shore ; 850
Took ship forthwith, and o'er the darkling
waves
Set sail towards Venice.

Here the last remains
Of Roman genius and prosperity
Lingered, when Rome herself and all the
West

Were ruled by Lombard or by Gothic lords :
Here the true Roman blood long time sur-
vived,

Unmixed with base addition ; for the place,
Buoyed like a shell upon the wandering waves,
Tempted not rude invader. Hither, then,
Ere He to Rome and to her fortunes wished
A long adieu, the Master bent His course, 861
Journeying all night along the sandy main.

All night He sailed, but when the morn
appeared,
Lo, mid the gold of sunrise the high tower
And domes were seen of Mark's cathedral
fair.

Whereat a fleet of open gondolas
Put off from shore, each bearing in its stern,
Arrayed in figured satin and silk cap,
Some stately Doge, who in the days of old

Reigned, a true prince, amid his haughty peers, 870

Was Lord of the Isles, and Bridegroom of the Sea.

Around their King they clustered, Dandolo
(The same, who with the French crusading chiefs

Vanquished and took the town of Constantine,) Standing aloft upon the foremost prow.

And 'Hail' they shouted, 'Mighty King ! Great God !

We, rightful heirs of Rome's undying name,
The link which binds together East and West,
Half Roman, half Byzantine ; we, who reigned,
As Athens once, as England now, supreme
O'er the wide waters and the distant isles,—
Give Thee good speed, and welcome to these shores 882

Christ, our immortal Prince and Emperor.'

They said ; and He, receiving with kind ear

Their dutious acclamatiom, seaward turned,
And sailed adown the gulf: for now the half

Of His long task was ended ; and new scenes,
Strange races, alien from the tongue and creed

Of Israel, Rome or Hellas, asked His aid.
The light ship danced along the sunlit waves,
And the angels with their harps made melody
Singing, 'Farewell, sweet Italy, farewell, 892
Land of great deeds and noble hearts! to
thee,
Of all the lands, and to thy stalwart sons
The palm belongs and crown of victory.'

NOTES TO BOOK VI.

- 1 l. 57. *Golden grave.* Gibbon, in one of his splendid sentences says, ‘Silk is the golden tomb, from whence a worm emerges in the shape of a butterfly.’
- 2 l. 75. *Gown . . . broidered thick.* A Roman general at his triumph wore a gown enriched with golden embroidery (*toga picta*), which in its general effect may have resembled that worn by our academical Chancellors.
- 3 l. 141. *Enter now, &c.* Cf. Virg. Ecls. iv. 48,
‘Agredere o magnos; aderit jam tempus, honores,
Cara Deūm soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.’
- 4 l. 190. *Of the world.* Perhaps I owe an apology to readers (not students of Browning) for the recurrence of this rhythm, unmusical to some ears. I contend, however, that the words *of the* are both short, and that an anapæst is a better substitute for an iambus than a pyrrhic.
- 5 l. 224. *Sovereign.* As I may be accused of inconsistent orthography, let me say that I have adopted the modern rather than the archaic form of this word, because the reference here was to things modern. In like manner, where two alternative forms existed, e.g. *bore, bare; farther, further; you, ye;* I have used one or other, as it better suited the sound. So Virgil uses *illi* and *oli*.
- 6 l. 240. *The just, &c.* Cf. words of St. Peter (Acts x. 34),
‘In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.’
- 7 l. 329. *Betwixt sighs and tears.* Virgil had short breath and Horace weak eyes; hence Augustus is reported to have said, when the two poets were dining at his side, ‘Ego sum inter suspiria et lacrimas.

- 8 l. 428. *Mountain of bricks and marble.* This will not appear an exaggeration, when it is remembered that this famous amphitheatre covered six acres of ground, and held 87,000 people.
- 9 l. 457. *Alleluia, &c.* I wish to defend the peculiar rhythm of these lines, as both expedient and necessary; expedient, because their very peculiarity tends to suggest the desired association; necessary, because if any other order of words than that used by Handel had been adopted, the association would have been lost.
- 10 l. 502. *Splendor.* This concrete and personal use of the word is a reminiscence of Dante's *Paradiso*, for which reason, and for the sake of distinction, I have preferred the Italian to the French termination.
- 11 l. 530. *As Prince and Censor.* A Roman censor, not possessing the imperium, was not preceded by lictors. The latter, however, are here attributed to the Lord in His general character as Emperor.
- 12 l. 639. *Sank humbled by the Strength of Israel.* This remark is doubtless open to some qualification, inasmuch as the Christianized Eastern empire survived more than 1000 years, and eventually received its *coup de grâce*, not from a Christian king, but from a Mohammedan Caliph. Still it was the decaying heathen foundation, which gradually involved in ruin its Christian superstructure.
- 13 l. 672. *Majestic world.* Cf. Shakesp. *Jul. Cæs.* I. ii.
 ‘So get the start of the majestic world,
 And bear the palm alone.’
- 14 l. 681. *Eastern Emperors.* Readers of this poem will be surprised at the repeated introduction of these much-despised monarchs. The truth appears to me to be, that their place in universal history, and their claims to the gratitude of posterity, have been much undervalued. It is hardly too much to say, that the cause of civilization, in the dreary interval from the fall of Rome to the crowning of Charlemagne, was mainly in

their keeping. Nor, but for them, would the Renaissance and Reformation have been possible, since it was from them that the study of Greek and Roman letters penetrated into, and was spread over, the rest of Europe.

15 l. 739. *Thine equal Deity.* Sceptics of the present day may question the importance of the Orthodox victory, but I am inclined to hold that, without the belief that Christ was God, the Gothic cathedrals would never have been built, and Mozart's Masses never have been written.

16 l. 746. *Roaring lions . . . and birds.* An entertaining account of these Byzantine curiosities will be found in that most-unjustly-depreciated novel, Count Robert of Paris.

17 l. 781. *The sacred banner.* The famous *labarum* or imperial standard of Constantine—the first military banner of Christendom—was a square of purple cloth with the monogram of Christ above the conquered dragon. I have refined a little on the original model. See Gibbon, Ch. XX., and Notes.

18 l. 784. *Crown of Thorns.* This and other ancient reliques (including the sacred lance, sponge, and chain) were sold, during the Latin occupation of Constantinople, to St. Louis, who built the *Sainte Chapelle* to enshrine and commemorate them.

TRANSLATIONS.

l. 135. ‘We praise Thee, O God: The noble city, Rome, capital of the world, praises Thee: Thee the order of Senators; Thee the illustrious band of emperors; Thee the glorious Roman army, unconquered through so many ages, salutes.’

ll. 161, 162. ‘Whither goest Thou, Lord?’ ‘I go to Rome, to be crucified afresh.’

l. 403. ‘KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.’

ll. 761, 762. ‘Before the ending of the day.’ ‘O Splendour of the Father’s Light !’

BOOK VII.

Islam.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord takes rest for some weeks at Spalatro in Dalmatia, whence He dispatches an embassy of angels to the Sultan at Constantinople. The latter with an escort of troops sets off to meet Him at Spalatro, and conducts Him to the imperial City, where a procession of Caliphs and other Mohammedan dignitaries advances to welcome Him. He afterwards proceeds to the cities of Damascus, Mecca, and Cairo.

EASTWARD the vessel held her watery course
Towards the Dalmatian shore, where dwelt of old
In a huge palace ^a, by himself designed,
The subtle Diocletian, tired of state
And cares of empire. In this self-same hall,
Far from the noise and strife of herded men,
The Master rested many days. Meantime
Angels He sent—a glorious embassy—

^a The palace or villa of Spalatro.

Unto the Sultan's court in far Stamboul ;
Gabriel the first, in vision ofttimes seen 10
By Islam's prophet ; with sad Azrael,
Herald of death ; and gentle Israfil¹,
The guardian spirit of pious Mussulmen².
These, borne on wings of pearly gossamer
Betwixt the green earth and the starry sky,
Arrived with sunrise at the massive porch
Which fronts the Caliph's palace. Now was
heard,

From many a heaven-aspiring minaret
Sounding, the loud Muezzin's call to prayer,
'God is the God : Mohammed is God's seer³.'
Meanwhile, environed by his veterans, 21
Passed through the palace gates,—sublime,
unmoved,
Silent, apparell'd in right royal state,—
The grave, majestic Lord of the East. On
horse,
A coal-black steed with flowing mane, he
rode :
Blue was the cloak that he was girt withal,
Blue too his tasselled cap, whereon was wrought
The young moon wedded with a single star ;
While starlike, round his neck and o'er his
breast,
Blazed many a sapphire and rich diamond. 30

Like meteors fall'n from heaven, the angelic
Three
Lighted before the wonder-stricken prince,
And first the bright-haired Gabriel uttered
voice :

' We are the children of the Lord of Hosts ;
We are the heralds of earth's heavenly King,
To Whom the Eternal Sire, Ancient of days,
Hath given all power, dominion, majesty,
From henceforth evermore in earth and heaven.
Speak then, O prince, for in His name we
come,

Wilt thou receive our Master and Thy God ?'

He said ; and Israfil with gentler voice 41
Pleaded, ' O potent Signior, revered
By the swart Syrian and the distant Moor,
Where pours old Nile his fertilizing stream,
And mid the sand-strown plains of Araby,—
Commander of the faithful ! He who most
Of all His glorious titles loves the name
' Faithful and True,' the Son of God most
High,

Waits in the region which adjoins thy realm,
Hither to hasten at thy call. Nor deem 50
That this our Lord, a harsh and partial Judge,
Comes to subvert thine empire and thy throne.
Nay rather, as of old the Punic tribes

Of Tyre and Sidon seemed to His clear eye
In their frank heathendom more tolerable
Than the strait, formal Jewish Pharisee ;
So now He welcomes all the tribes of the earth,
Whate'er their creed, who upright live and
just,
Loving the supreme Love and Justice, God.
And most of all the heathen, you who bow 60
No knee to monstrous shape of wood or stone,
But yield your hearts' allegiance to the One
Invisible God, and from that worship true
Twelve hundred years have swerved not, you
He calls
Into His Kingdom.'

So the seraph spake,
And the mild earnest Sultan, turning full
Eyes of deep quest upon the heavenly Three,
Knew their sincere intent and loyal mind ;
Then answered, 'Angels of the Most High
God,
Who, at His throne attendant, hear His Voice,
And to the hearts of men declare His Will ! 71
Say to your King, that as the shame-faced
moon
Blanches her silver at the approach of day,
So I my realm and sceptre, lands and wealth—
Whate'er the crescent and her mated star

Yet hold of power and princely dignity,—
Cast at His feet, and welcome to His own
Him whom the stars obey, the worlds adore.'

He spake ; and lo, three stranger forms drew
near,

Diverse in face and language and attire 80
From living men : the first a stalwart chief,
Long-bearded and long-robed, with deep-set
eyes

Prophetic, grave of aspect, framed for rule ;
The next an Eastern warrior, lithe and strong,
Black-haired, high-browed, with fearless flashing
eyes,

Armed with a curvèd scimitar, and crowned
With silken turban, whence a sapphire huge
Made with his answering rays a mimic sun ;
The third an old and reverend patriarch,
Royal of mien, with wise demeanour bland, 90
Clad in rich robes of silk and linen fine.

‘O Sultan,’ quoth the first, ‘behold the man
Whom Ishmael’s children of all Adam’s stock
Most honour ; him, whose written word is law
To Turk, Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, Moor ;
Whose name each dawn and sunset is proclaimed
From mosque and minaret through all Thy
realm :

The Arabian seer, Mohammed. I, by grace

Of Christ, the Lord of life, to earth restored,
After long sojourn with the fleeting dead, 100
Hereby recant my vain supremacy.
Not lowlier doth the meanest woodland flower
Stoop at the feet of some heaven-soaring pine,
Than I my mission and prerogative
Merge in the Will Divine, and lay the lot
Of Islam past, and present, and to be
Into His lap, Who hath redeemed my soul,
And crowned my brows with immortality.
But thou, my Son and Vicar, ponder well
What counsel I impart. God were not God, 110
Did not His all-enfolding Love embrace
Each creature in His wide-spread family.
Therefore with confidence I, chosen seer
Of this great people, who despite some sin,
Much fault and human frailty, yet with zeal
Sought to convert the seed of Ishmael
From base idolatry to the living God,—
Place all my hope, and rest my cause entire
In His unerring justice and goodwill. 119
Thou then likewise go gladly with these men ;
And as from every land and every clime,
Which skirts the midland ocean, year by year
Trails through the desert the long pilgrim
band,
To kiss the sacred stone, and bathe the feet⁴

In Mecca's consecrated fount ; so now
 Thou, and much people with thee, seek the
 Rock,
 Whence this our stone was hewn ; behold the
 Light,
 Which fed our doubtful and earth-sullied fires ;
 Bathe in the Stream which cleanseth evermore.'

He said, and after him the warrior prince 130
 Spake wingèd words ; ' The Sultan Saladin,
 Whom not the lion-hearted English king,
 Nor wise French Philip, nor the leaguèd swords
 Of Europe's chosen knights availed to quell,
 Salutes the king his brother. Peace at length
 Binds with her silken cord both East and West,
 Since on Moriah's height and Calvary's hill
 Crescent and Cross now tranquil, side by side,
 Reign ; but not long shall reign ; for what the
 sword.

139

Of fierce Crusader gained not, Christ Himself,
 Friend of all nations, Conqueror of all hearts,
 Wins without arms by His prevailing Love.'

He ceased, and ancient Haroun, famed in tale,
 Haroun surnamed Al Raschid ^b, Prince of the
 East,
 Confederate once with mighty Charlemain,
 Took up his parable and said, ' All hail,

^b Literally, Aaron the pious.

Brother, of all the Caliphs who have reigned
Since great Mohammed's day the happiest far;
In that to thee the Will Omnipotent
Vouchsafes to welcome Heaven's immortal King !
For not of Europe nor the West alone 151
Comes He Deliverer, nor doth own as sons,
Whose knees bow to the Cross, whose hearts to
gold ;

But on the lands lit by the new-born day,
Oppressed, yet patient; poor and miserable,
But loving; blind, yet worshipping the light,—
Causeth the brightness of His Star to shine.

O vision of great joy! Behold, I see
The long, sad tale of slavery and despair
Rolled, like some storm-cloud emptied of its fire,
Beyond the horizon to the nether world. 161
Dead eyes are quickened, broken knees made
strong;

All that was best in our poor, childish minds
Beams out afresh, bright and regenerate,
In the wholesome freedom of His ordered reign.
The woes of all the centuries fade away,
And the dull stream of being, choked with
weeds, 167

Turbid and foul, resumes the limpid flow,
The flash, the song, the freshness of its prime.
Live on, such ages; know no end, such reign⁵!

We patriarchs of the East, to whom the strife
And tongues of herded men seem less than
nought,
Matched with the voiceless wisdom of the
stars,—

Welcome the stedfast Throne of God made man,
Hail the calm triumph of Eternity.
Now therefore from each quarter of thy realm
Straightway proclaim a holy pilgrimage :
Thyself be chief, and let these comrades mine
March in the wake of thine auspicious train.'

The Sultan, glad at heart that men so wise 180
In counsel, and so high renowned in arms,
Should guide his erring wit and guard his throne,
Cried, ' Thrice and ten times welcome are ye,
friends,

Masters we rather call ye, whom in fault
Of worthier office, as our ministers
We name ; thee, sage Mohammed, Chief Vizier;
Thee, Saladin, commander of our host ;
Thee, royal Haroun, steward of our court.

Now, while yet mounts the glorious lamp of
heaven,

189

Let us take ship, and sail to the utmost bound
Of Marmora's calm and land-beleaguered sea.
But since no enterprize, unblessed of God,
Prosper ; let one of Heaven's sweet visitants—

Or Israfil, or mightier Gabriel,
Or Azrael, guardian of the blessed dead,—
Ere we depart, give praise to God.' Thereat
Sad Azrael took his golden harp, and sang
In notes melodious, like the bird of night,
Who through the darkness of the forest glades
Utters his voice, and woos the listening moon ;
'God of our fathers, Spirit of life and death,
Great all-absorbing Sea, in Whom the rills 202
Of all our little lives find rest and end !
Accept our praise, Thy due. A thousand years
Are in Thy sight as yesterday : on high,
Throned in Thy starry seat, Thou reignest King
Throughout all ages. Thou art Lord alone :
The heavens may vanish as a scroll, the world
Be fused in fiery vapour ; but unchanged
Thou art from everlasting, and shalt be.' 210

Bareheaded stood the Caliph and his troops
What time the Seraph sang, nor dared they join
Their praises, seeing their lips had not yet
learnt

The harmonies of heaven : but when he ceased,
Low on the ground they bent the suppliant
knee,—

Turning their faces, not to Mecca's shrine,
But Westward, where the Great Deliverer
dwelt,—

And, as their custom was, in silence prayed.
The Lord of mercy to their prayers devout 219
Hearkened, and sent a sign. For lo, in heaven
A light was seen, shaped as the waxing moon,
Between whose argent horns a cross of stars
Shone eminent. The Sultan much rejoiced,
Marking the heavenly fire, and cried aloud,
'See how the mild rays of the Christian Cross
Linger above our Crescent : therefore now
Let us take heart, and with unwearyed feet
Press to the far land where our King abides.
The Lord Himself invites us, and the skies
Shine out responsive to our humble prayer.' 230

Down to the bright shores of the rushing strait
They marched forthwith,—old man and gentle
boy,
And stalwart youth, and armèd warrior,—
A legion countless by one impulse swayed.
As, when the South wind, driving furiously,
Raises huge uproar mid the embattled waves,
On rush the moving walls of crested brine,
Tumultuous, never-ending, surge on surge,
Until they break upon the far sea-shore ;
So, ranged in martial order, swept the host 240
Into the harbour of the Golden Horn.
First through the Bosphorus and the land-locked
sea

Sailing, they reached the Thracian Chersonese ;
Where, centuries agone, the Athenian star
Sank, at the mouth of *Ægos'* fatal stream ^c,
Beneath the sterner Spartan influence.

Here disembarking, towards the further shore
They marched afoot, then stretched their weary
limbs

Under the wakeful stars ; but soon as morn
Showed her clear head above the shades of
night,

250

Marched ever onward by the *Ægean* Sea—
A journey of twelve days—through hilly Thrace
And Macedonia ; skirting the wide plain,
Where Cæsar's blood on Brutus was avenged ^d,
And Pella, Grecian Philip's royal town.

But when the red globe of the thirteenth sun
Blazed in the West ; behold, the purple line
Of Adria's distant gulf before them lay ;
Whereat, defiling round the nearest hill,
A band of shining seraphs they espied, 260
And in the midst of His angelic host
The Form, long-sought for, of their living
Lord.

Hailing which sight, the Caliph, bare of
head,

Advanced to meet his Master. Never word

^c *Ægospotami.*^d *Philippi.*

Spake he, nor durst uplift his eyes, but straight
Fell at His feet adoring. Him the Lord
Beholding loved, and spake, ‘ Arise, O Prince :
Look in My face and tell Me thy desire.
For though My brow yet wear the laurel crown
Borne by the Roman Emperors, My heart 270
Is nowise haughty and untamed as theirs.
Give Me thy hand, and who thy comrades three,
So stately and so royal of attire,
Make known.’ The Sultan answered, ‘ Gracious
Sire,

These are the lights of Islam. Not more famed
In Rome great Cæsar, nor the bard of Troy
In Greece, nor Richard of the lion heart
Among the valiant English ; than the seer
Mohammed, founder of our ancient faith,
And wise Haroun, and noble Saladin, 280
In the fair regions of the Rising Sun.
My heart’s desire, O King, Thou knowest full
well.

I would escort Thee to that famous town,
Than which no city, save imperial Rome,
Hath title more illustrious ; whence in turn
Cæsar and Caliph thrice five hundred years
Have reigned majestic o’er the nations round.’

He ceased : and great Mohammed after him
Low in the dust abased his princely head,

Pleading, 'O Lord of justice, Lord of love! 290
We are as stubble, which the indignant sun
Knows not to clothe with life again ; but Thou
Burn out the drouth and deadness of our
hearts ;

Plant us afresh in Thine own fruitful field ;
So we, Thy prodigals, yet children still,
May, when the harvest-time is duly done,
Be garnered as good sheaves ; and, safe in
heaven,

Have the fruition of our God at last.'

To whom the all-gracious Lord made answer
mild :

' As is the silver lily to the rose ; 300
As the trim daisy, pearl of Western meads,
Is to the frail and purple hyacinth ;
Or as are crystal shapes of wintry dew
To ruby buds and emerald leaves of spring ;
So is the faith of Northern Christendom,
Rooted in manly freedom and strong thought,
Matched with the bright-hued creeds of Orient.
I take thy faith and thee ; transmuting this,
Through Mine own Merits and the Father's
Love,

Into a deathless flower of Paradise : 310
On thee conferring, through My saving Cross,
God's sonship and the heritage of heaven.'

Like as the moon of harvest; which through
mists

Auctumnal, mantling all her Eastern path,
Forges her obtuse way; when now she rides
High in mid heaven, throws off her orange
dress,

Sharpens the dull rims of her disc, and clear
In cloth of silver dominates the sky :

So, having cast aside the doubtful garb 319
Of his old faith, and crowned his nighted soul
With the resplendent Cross of Christendom,
Stood, with fair hope and tranquil joy new-
born,

The dreaded seer of warlike Araby.

Now was the charmèd hour, when lingers yet
Broad stain of crimson round the sunless sky ;
When stars unveil their modest fires, and night
Disputes with day the world's dominion.

Gathered beneath heaven's darkling canopy,
Stood long-robed Sheikh and harnessed warrior
Speechless in prayer; anon uprose the cry, 330
'God is the God, and Christ His only Son.'

Then did the Almighty Father, Whose high
Will

Moves or transforms brute matter, work once
more

A marvel for His faithful worshippers.

For, like enchanted flowers, sprung from the ground,

Or view of stately mountains, when the mist Rises, and bares their huge heights to the sky ; Dome, palace, minaret,—whate'er the hand

Of Hindu, Syrian, or ingenious Moor 339

Had framed most graceful and most glorious,—

Far as the eye could stretch, covered the plain.

Bright and conspicuous mid the splendid throng,

The glory of Agra and pride of Hindustan ^e

Spread out beneath the moon its towers sub-lime

And fairy ring of alabaster domes.

Hard by was seen the sumptuous Alcazar ; And—queen of palaces, most loveliest home E'er built by man for man ; with arabesque Of subtlest pattern, green and gold and blue, Delicious, interwoven, like a dream ; 350

With marble fountains cool, and archèd courts Luxurious ; and rich domes, where every shaft Of fierce Iberian noontide was exchanged For gilded gloom and gloss of purple shade,— The Alhambra rose, rude and rough-hewn without,

Like the much-prizèd Persian shell, but stored With a most rich and precious pearl within⁶.

^e The Taj mahal.

Not far the princely mosque of Cordova⁷
Displayed its labyrinth of carven shafts
And aisles unending, like that Indian tree^f, 360
Whose branches take root downward, and create
A grove, where sprung at first one slender stem.
Thou too, great mosque of Omar, crescent-
crowned,

Broughtest thy huge arch and aërial dome
Rock-centred⁸, to salute thy God and King.
And ye, fair halls of Delhi, where of old
Reigned the great Indian emperors—ye too,
Mighty in bulk, high-porched and many-towered,
Yet freaked like petals of some veinèd flower,
Shone in your rich, minute magnificence 370
To grace His advent. Scene so bright and
rare

Not the most fruitful quill of Eastern bard
Pictured, nor filled in hope the Prophet's
heaven.

That night within the moon-ensilvered courts
Of the fair Moorish palace a great feast
Was spread of choicest fruits and Lesbian wine.
Lamps of chased silver and alternate gold
Gleamed from the roof, and o'er the imperial
seat
Rose a rich canopy, with jewels dight.

^f The Banyan tree.

When all had eaten and sparely drunk, (for
wine

380

In banquet of true Moslem hath no place,) 380

Thus to His guest the Lord made kindly
speech.

‘O sovereign of the wide and fruitful realm,
Spread o’er three continents, which yet obeys
The uncertain dictates of Medina’s seer!

Not to insult thy prophet’s name come I,
Nor to usurp thy throne, with Christian thieves
Confederate: let the Caliph’s majesty
Sway, as it long hath swayed, the leaguèd
tribes

Which line the Southern shores of the inland
sea,

390

And wild Arabia, and the classic land
Watered by great Euphrates, and the tract
By the Byzantine Cæsars once controlled.

Above your temples shine the hornèd moon
As heretofore, and be thou spiritual head,
Regent for Christ, of the great Moslem lords,—
Nizam, Nawab or Ameer, whose rich courts
Reared by your Turkish kinsmen, yet adorn⁹
The hills and plains of populous Hindustan.

But from a purer and less earthly spring 400
Drink ye hereafter: for your prophet’s book,
If bright with vision and wild imagery,

Breathes not the immortal strength and fire
divine

Of rapt Isaiah ; nor of David's lyre
Knows the majestic sweetness ; nor so tells
Of the true heaven, prize of all duteous souls,
As my beloved disciple, faithful John.
Likewise your whispered silent orisons
Rise not to God with potent voice austere, 409
As the great prayers and praises of My Church.
So let your temples be no longer mute ;
But from deep organ and harmonious voice
Outpouring stream of praise, with earthborn
notes

Match ye the angelic melodies of heaven
Nor let there want the grace and added charm
Of pomp and ceremony ; for our God,
As in bright-plumèd bird or purple flower,
Hath joy moreover in the stately robes,
Which deck His king or glorify His priest.
Your mosques be henceforth holy to My
Name ; 420

Your dervishes be priests, and robed in white,
No more with cries and dance insensible
Insult My court, nor mutter doubtful words
With idle repetition ; but exalt
In fair concert, befitting Heaven's High King,
The Triune Father, Son, and Spirit divine.

Your mollahs, learned in Mohammed's law,
Study henceforth the Word of life, whereby
His hidden Will God doth to man reveal.

Your grave imáms¹⁰ put on the Cross of Christ,
And from My saints take new authority 431

As abbots or as patriarchs. Myself

Will be your súpreme Pontiff: nor have fear
That the great fathers of the Christian Church
Deem you unmeet for such high fellowship.

I Christ resume the keys of heaven and hell,
Granted aforetime to My followers;

And from all lands, each kindred, every race
Bring the lost sheep into My heavenly Fold.'

As drops of rain, which on the thirsty
ground 440

Fall grateful, when long heat has dried the herb,
Shrivelled the leaf, and bent the languid
flower;

So welcome on their trancèd heathen ears
Fell the glad message of the Lord of Life.

Yet sate the men, albeit their hearts rejoiced,
In reverent silence; not, as the English use,
With hum or shout proclaiming loud applause.
At length the Sultan, with deep-uttered voice
Ruffling the tranquil current of their thought,
Few words, but weighty, for the scattered
tribes

Of Islam past, and present, and to be,
 Spake : ' In the Name of God Most Merciful.
 I, Vicar of the prophet, Padishah¹¹,
 And Sultan, hereby render homage due
 To the Great Judge and Son of God Most
 High,—

Nay rather (since in Him the threefold Might
 Of Father everlasting, Son, and Spirit
 Concentred shine), to the Great God Himself,
 From Whom proceed, to Whom all things
 return.

All hail Creator, Saviour, Sanctifier, 460
 Monarch of heaven, Lord of the hearts of
 men,
 Sole Sovran Emperor, one Eternal King !'

Thus they discoursed, till high in heaven the
 moon
 Guided her silver and imperfect globe,
 Then 'neath the quiet moonbeams sought
 repose.

But when the seventh morn from her saffron
 couch
 Rose, dewy-faced ; was heard the clash of arms,
 The voice of brazen trump, and beat of drum.
 And now Spalatro's royal hall they leave,
 Traverse the Illyrian plains, and skirt the
 hills

Of Macedon ; then on by Hebrus' stream
Marching, attain the walls of Hadrian's town,
Where Rome's enfeebled legions bowed before
The warlike fury of the invading Goth^g ;
Whence, by a two days' course, they reach at
length

Royal Stamboul, the city of their quest.

Sweet as the voice of some enchanted brook,
Which from its head-spring in the distant moor
Leaps in wild frolic down the laughing glen :
Fair as to seamen nearing home the view 480
Of crags moss-carpeted, what time the sun,
Dying, bequeaths his purple to the sea ;
His crimson to the rocks ; his cloth of gold,
Scarlet and molten emerald to the sky :
So sweet, so passing fair, so wonderful
Sparkled and bloomed and murmured—a huge
pearl,

Based on a sapphire, — the world's fairest
town¹²,

The domèd sister of the Bosphorus.
For not alone the pride and luxury
Of warlike Islam and her gifted sons, 490
But added earlier grace of Eastern Rome,
Statues divine in marble, bronze, and stone,—
The treasures of old Greece and Italy,—

^g Battle of Hadrianople, A.D. 375.

(As when the imperial City to rude eyes
 Of camp-bred warriors in the first crusade
 Appeared more glorious than of earthly mould¹³,)
 Adorned each nook and brightened every
 square.

Huge throng of Muftis^h, Emirs and Pachas,
 Haled from all quarters of the Turkish realm,
 Came forth to greet their Master. Nor alone
 Lords of the living, but the dead likewise— 501
 Caliphs of ancient times, in long white cloaks¹⁴
 Riding on camels ; Sheikhs of Araby ;
 Emirs of Seville and Cordova ; Beys
 Of Tunis and Algiers ; with Mamelukes
 Of Egypt, and a band of Janizaries¹⁵,
 Much famed in arms, came streaming through
 the plain.

Conspicuous rode the formidable chiefs,
 Who, following great Mohammed, far and wide

Bore the renown and terror of his name 510
 Through Iran, Egypt, the long Libyan coast
 And Europe ; till the warlike tide was stemmed
 By God and Charles Martel at the field of
 Tours.

As in the star-bespangled firmament
 Arcturus, Jove, and the bright star of eve,

^h Interpreters of the Law.

With belted, huge Orion, shower the gold
Of their more stedfast and imperial rays
Above the fires, their seeming tributaries ;
So mid the inferior princes of their line
Rode Ali, saint of Islam, with his peer 520
Victorious Omar, and Moawiyah,
Sire of the first imperial dynastyⁱ.
Not far from these rode Mahmoud, of the
Turks

First Sultan, with his valiant followers¹⁶,
Togrul, to whom the Caliph's mantle fell¹⁷ ;
Alp Arslan^k, who from the Emperor himself—
Still claiming, in great Cæsar's awful name,
O'er all the kings of the earth supremacy,—
Took tribute ; Malek Shah, who spread his
realm

From China to the distant Bosphorus ; 530
And last Mohammed, of brave Othman's race,
Who from the feeble-minded Constantine,
Latest survivor of the purple-robed
And laurelled Cæsars, wrested by fair fight
The imperial city. Next came Zinghis Khan,
With Tamerlane, prince of the fierce Moguls,
Who for brief space yet wider empire swayed
Than Roman, Greek, or English at full height

ⁱ The Omnidynasty, a branch of which conquered and ruled in Spain.

^k lit. ‘conquering lion.’

And zenith of their glory. Each was robed
 In cloak of diverse hue, discerning well 540
 His nation, age, and princely dignity.
 In white the Caliphs rode ; the great Moguls
 In orange capes ; the Sultans draped in blue.
 Alone the luckless Aziz, who held out,
 First of the Caliphs, to our Christian West
 The hand of brotherly peace and fellowship¹,
 But, fallen a prey to the rude Russian pest,
 Shorn of his lands, deserted by his friends,
 Fell last a victim to his subjects' wrath,—
 He only, 'neath the Sultan's azure cape, 550
 Star-broidered, wore the Caliph's sacred white.
 Onward they came, with cymbal, horn, and
 drum
 Making wild music, while the laughing sun
 Flashed from the thousand domes and minarets,
 Which graced each quarter of the illustrious
 town.
 First Abubekr^m, a venerable chief,
 White with the snows of seventy years, drew
 nigh,
 And thus bespake his Sovereign : ‘God is
 great,

¹ Abdul Aziz, the first Sultan who visited a Christian capital.

^m Father-in-law of Mohammed, first Caliph, and conqueror of Syria.

And Thou art God ; we insects of a day
Breathe at Thy pleasure ; if Thou hide Thy
Face,

560

Are not. Yet, matchless in Thy clemency
As in Thy might, be gracious, and incline
Unto Thy servants' tale propitious ear.

For we too, though in clouds our sun hath
set,

Mid the world's heroes boast a place : to us,
Wild children of the desert, fell the throne,
Empire, and sceptre of the gorgeous East
From Rome's degenerate offspring. These thou
seest,

Turbaned, and habited in priestly white,
Reigned in my place over the broad domains,
Won by their prowess from the nations round.
Of Ishmael's blood, and from the sandy wilds
Of Araby we sprung : but since the Turk, 573
Armed with the Caliph's high authority,
Won the great Eastern capital, and rose
To the first place in Islam,—since that time
We Arabs to the Sultan of Stamboul
Loyal allegiance, not subjection, own.

Therefore we pray, Great Father, ere the north
Unto her colder skies, not warmer hearts, 580
Receive Thee ; seal Thy promise and our love
In Mecca, cradle of our wandering race.

There, whither turned each pious Moslem face
Each morn and eventide at the hour of prayer,
Unloose our bonds, and make us all Thine
own.'

Answered the Lord, 'My purpose and intent
Thou hast interpreted. But now let all
Forth to Justinian's ancient dome repair,
And with due rites devout invoke therein 589
The Unseen Eternal Wisdom—Lamp of Truth,
And Light of Life—that He this sanctuary
May choose for His abiding dwelling-place.'
So they made haste, and, ranged in order
meet,

Marched, to the Seraphs' music keeping time,
To Saint Sophia's venerable pile.
And as they went, they sang, 'Who shall
ascend
Unto the courts of God, and who shall stand
In Allah's heavenly temple? even he
That hath clean hands and uncorrupted heart;
Who fasted and gave alms, nor took reward 600
Against the innocent; who at early dawn,
At noontide, and at setting of the sun
Raised pious hands to God All-merciful¹⁸;
Who the strait ways of truth and righteousness
Loved with his whole heart, strength, and soul
and mind.

On him the stars shall shine, and Israfil
Loosen for him the gates of Paradise.'

Much people thronged the dome, who, bending
 low,
Worshipped the Prince of Heaven, and spread
 their robes
Before His Feet. He, walking through their
 midst, 610
With Water sanctified the kneeling throng ;
Then, robed in azure cope, with crown of
 pearls,
Whereon a Dove was wrought, with silver
 wings
Brooding outstretched,—took seat beneath the
 dome,
While all the princes did Him reverence.
Anon, that charm of music might not lack,
The quire of angels raised their voices high,
(As royal David once, when he prepared
To build a temple to the Most High God
Great and exceedingly magnifical, 620
But left the work to Solomon his son ;)
Harping with harps, and singing, ‘Thine, O
 Lord,
The power, the greatness, and the majesty ;
Thine too the glory and the victory :
For Thou as King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Art high exalted : in Thy Hand is might
 And strength resistless ; for all things in
 Heaven

And all on the earth are Thine, and over all
 Thou reignest everlastingⁿ.' Thus sang
 The tuneful Seraphim, till now the sun 630
 Shot round the domes and clustering semi-
 domes

Of the ancient fane his rays of gold and red,
 And shades of night fell over land and skies.

But on the morrow, at due time of prayer,
 The Lord, as Eastern Monarch ; laying aside
 Cæsar's embossèd mail and wreath of bay ;
 Clothed Him in long white cloak and tasselled
 cap,

Thick spread with sapphires and with diamonds,
 And, on a black steed mounted, rode in state
 Unto the mosque of royal Suleiman. 640

Marched at His horse's head brave Saladin,
 Bearing the imperial standard, broidered rich
 With cross, and star, and crescent ; at His left
 A jewelled lamp of gold Mohammed bare,
 And Uriel at His right a golden Cross.

Likewise at setting sun to Achmet's fane
 Rode He ; and, clad in robes pontifical,
 Sang, not in Christian Latin, nor strange Greek,

ⁿ I Chronicles xxix. 11.

But homelier Arabic, with cadence sweet,
Such as doth make our English minsters glad,
The psalms and litanies of evensong. 651
Then, when the day was fully done, and night
Drew her grey mantle over street and shrine,
Down to the wilderness of pillared stones¹⁹,
Built subterranean, where the poorer sort,
Twisters of silk and weavers, ply their trade,
He bent His steps, with Israfil for guide.
Here many halt and maimed, and some
diseased,
Dumb, blind and deaf came flocking to His
Feet,
As once in Salem ; and He healed them all.
And, being healed, along the corridors 661
Of that mysterious cloister winding slow,
They chanted, mild and musical, like winds,
Which whisper nightly through the rustling
wood :

'Lord Jesus, Saviour kind,
The sick, the maimed, the blind
In Thee all comfort find.

• Good Shepherd, on Thy Breast
The weary sheep have rest,
The sorrowful are blest.

'Thou to the blind art Sight,
 Thou to the weak art Might,
 Thou to the world art Light.'

'O Sun, and Shield, and Stay !
 Shed on our hearts Thy Day,
 Grant us Thy Peace alway.'

When night had fallen, within the courts
 sublime,
 Built o'er the swift and shining Bosphorus,
 Compassed by all the worth of the East, sate
 He ;

Listing to many a legend, many a tale
 Of Moslem faith and Moslem chivalry. 680

Now Amrou told the glories of the Nile
 And victories of his sword invincible ;
 Now Abderrahman sang the lustrous halls
 Of Zehra's palace^o ; now Averroes²⁰

Once more to their untutored ears made known
 The treasured lore of the great Stagyrite.

Or Haroun held them spell-bound and en-
 tranced,

Recounting feats of harmless wizardry,—
 Such as to childish hearts in every land

^o A magnificent freak of the Spanish Caliphs, of which not a vestige now remains.

Have given delight unending, and still give,—
How by enchantment in one night uprose 691
Great, gem-built palaces ; how wealth untold,
Stored by the Genii, lay concealed in earth ;
How giants sprung from vapour ; how great
doors

Of rock flew open at the whispered word.

But when the stars waxed faint, and thronèd
Morn

Rose from her temple in the distant East,
Over the silver strait the Lord set sail, 700
And journeyed towards Damascus. Through
the gloom

Of early morning and late eve fared He,
Shunning the blaze of the too fervent day.
So, when six times the moon, and seven times
yet

Had risen and paled ; lo, nestling mid the
plain,

Lay the primeval city, slumber-bound ;
Her slender towers and spreading cupolas
Seen indistinctly by the uncertain light
Of the sky, which trembled between night and
dawn.

And as they sate, and as they watched, behold,
Sounds in the distant East, and voices rose,
As of some mighty, marching multitude. 712

For the Celestial realm and far Japan,
And the swart tribes of India and Ceylon
Had sent their myriads, whose twinkling
lamps

Shone o'er the hills in line interminable.

Mid groves of palm the Master sate encamped,
Till rose the Daystar; meanwhile heralds
twain

Made speed towards Damascus, to make known
His advent. Soon the gathering sound was
heard

720

Of trampling feet and voices clamorous;
And, ere retreating shades were drowned in
day,

Thronged men and mingled children with glad
step

To hail the Prince of Life. He, moving slow
From the near heights, arrayed in raiment
white,

And on a camel seated, met midway
The Syrian host, and turned propitious ear
Unto the changeful burden of their cries.

For divers ailed, and some were forward
borne

Hardly, on litters; some by children led, 730
Infirm, and worn with toil, or bent with
years.

'But now relief long-hoped-for,' (so the Sheikh
Who ruled them pleaded) 'now for all their
griefs

Comfort was near at hand, and health, and
joy,

For the GREAT CALIPH would make all things
new.'

Christ had compassion on the kneeling throng ;
And whoso gazed in faith upon His Face,
Was whole of his disease : such influence
wrought

The benediction of His healing smile.

And now they stood beside the rock-fed
streams

740

Pharphar and Abana, whose limpid flow
Seemed to the Syrian leper, in his pride,
Than Jordan's turbid waves more excellent.
Here many were baptized, and Christ Him-
self,

Inclining, marked their foreheads with His
Cross,

Saying, 'Now is come Salvation and the reign
Of God's Anointed and Eternal Son,
Through Whom the worlds were made, by
Whom is given

Pardon to all who call upon His Name.'

Then came yet others from remoter lands,

Mikados, Khans, Celestial emperors, 751
Slaves of a self-imposed apathy,
Doomed to the self-same round of petty
cares
From birthday to the grave; on whose dull
brows
No lightning flashes from the heaven of truth,
Nor know their slaggard souls the lofty love,
Which nerves to deeds of royal heroism.
Came last not least Siddartha²¹,—the good
prince,
Who left a king's court to convert a world.
Him and his creed unnumbered myriads 760
Follow, and know till death no guide but
him.
And yet no second life of conscious bliss
Proclaims he to his dreaming votaries,
But here renunciation; there, as prize,
Complete absorption in the Being of God.
As in the month of April oftentimes
Storm follows calm, and sun succeeds to rain
Alternate, while the heavens are overlaid
With patches of dark cloud and strips of
blue;
So now conflicting gusts of hope and dread 770
Swept o'er those Eastern hearts, when they
beheld

The sovran Arbiter of weal and woe,
At length, to cheer their faith and calm their
fear,
This song, half hymn, half dirge, the pilgrims
sang.

‘ Mist of the waste and wandering sea,
Sand of the shore, drift of the rocks are we.
Our little lives roll by
Thoughtless and passionless to eternity.
We toil, and dream, and pray,
Toil yet again, and watch, and sleep ; then pass
away.

780

‘ Yet sometimes, when the skies are bright and
still,
And the moon eyes us from her crystal
height,
We seem to float upon the wings of night,
To float and dream our fill,—
Swept onward in the impetuous run
Of that life-giving and love-centred Will,
Which moves the worlds and lights the
sun.

‘ Then, when the brief tale of our dreams is
spent,
We lay us down content,

No more to toil, no more to watch or pine,

But to be blent,

791

O deathless Essence and divine !

Blent, disembodied, fusèd utterly

And lost in Thee.

'Heaven of the Christian, hast thou bliss
More passing sweet, more wonderful than this ?—
To be a portion of the Eternal Mind,

Which, when the heavens were uncreate,
Traced the dim characters of endless fate ;
A part of that unconquerable Will,

800

Which of Itself doth loose and bind ;
Exalt, make low ; annul and reinstate ;
And the Great Universe with life and strength
fulfil ?'

To whom the Lord, 'O meek and poor in
spirit !

The lives ye fain would lavish on My Life,
The souls ye fain would merge in the Heart
Divine,

I give ye back again ; and by My strength
Make your humility and weakness strong.

Henceforth be no more dreamers ; for the
faith,

Which can rejoice in nothingness, hath roots

Deeper than death, and, grown in kindlier
soil,

811

May bear rich fruit and blossom in good works.
Dear lands of the East, home of the elected
race,

Birthplace of Christ, and dwelling-place of
God !

The Lord hath need yet of your sacred streams,
Your spreading palm-groves, and your golden
skies.

Dear tribes of the East, brave in your hopeless
love !

The Lord hath need yet of your tranquil lives.
What though victorious Europe in My Name
Stretch her supremacy from sea to sea ;

820

Yet is the race not always to the swift,
Nor do the proud and lofty, but the meek,
Fight the best fight, endure the stoutest charge
Under the banners of the Lord of Hosts.'

Three days they tarried mid the springs and
groves

Of fair Damascus ; then beside the slopes,
Which skirt great Hermon, through the desert
fare

Unto the shores of the Idumean Sea.

And now they reach Medina, where the seer

Raised his first standard; now discern the walls

Of Mecca's holier temple. At the porch 831
Appeared the guardian Sheikh, whom thus addressed

The seer Mohammed with imperious speech;
'Servant of God, Thy present God admit
Into the shrine ne'er touched by Christian foot.
Who bids thee open is Mohammed's self.'

'O prophet,' said the hoary man, 'if thou
Be my great ancestor, thy word is law:
Else had not Afreet nor conspiring Djinn ²³

Availed to unlock the temple, or disclose 840
Our sacred stone to unbeliever's eye.'

Saying which words, he backward forced amain
The close-shut massive bolt, and bared to view
The great black stone, revered by Mussulmen.
At once with huge convulsion quaked the ground,

Flashed through the affrighted air blue forkèd tongues

Of lightning, and loud peals of thunder rolled;
As if the pillars of heaven's firmament
Were loosed, and all the fabric of the skies 849
Involved in ruin. Soon the clouds fell back;
Shone with unveiled strength the glorious sun;

Springs in the desert rose, and palm-trees
fair

Clothed the dull landskip ; while, more glorious
still,

Mid His redeemed to all eyes visible,
Stood the dear Lord and Saviour of mankind.
Not kinglier, in the pictured Paradise^P,
Framed by the fancy of famous Tintoret,
While many a martyr, many a knight and
saint

Throng the rich canvas ; yet, distinguished
clear

In grace and strength and godlike majesty,
Reigns over all the immortal Son of Man. 861

Then they took ship, and northward ploughed
their way

E'en to the Red Sea's head, to Cairo thence
Marching afoot. A pillar of red fire
Lightened their path by night, a bank of cloud
Floated above, to shield their heads, by day.
Egypt rejoicèd at her King's return,
And from the golden gardens of the Nile²³
Swarmed to salute her peaceful Conqueror.
As sand upon the sea-shore, streamed the
host,

870

^P The 'Paradiso' in the great hall of the Doge's palace at Venice.

Which by that ancient river met their Lord,
 Led by the valiant Soldan, Saladin.
 Day was now dying, and broad waves of light,
 As with a conflagration, lit the domes
 And steeples of the Caliph's royal town ;
 Whilst on the river's further brink, like gods
 Of the olden time, who with unclosèd eyes
 Guarded the fortunes of their ancient land,
 Stood the great Pyramid and the calm-eyed
 Sphinx.

879

The same, well-nigh two thousand years agone,
 Had seen the Lord of Life, a Hebrew boy,
 With Joseph and His Mother, borne along
 An exile and a wanderer ; now they hailed,
 Or seemed to hail His royal glad return.
 ' Divine, Eternal Caliph, Christ adored !'
 So kneeling spake the Egyptian prince, ' What
 praise
 To match Thy glory can we yield ? what
 thanks
 To Him, Who in His heavenly kingdom finds
 A place for Islam ? We are Thine, great Lord ;
 Thy grace and goodness undeserved, unasked,
 Have bought our hearts. Low at Thy Feet we
 lie,

891

And offer Thee the living sacrifice
 Of heart, and soul, and spirit.' Then it seemed

As if a winged host thronged the conscious
air

Of glorious shadows,—all the myriad souls,
Born in far times and regions manifold,
Who had maintained their faith inviolate
In the One Merciful and Unseen God.

And a great sound of voices numberless,
Like that once heard by John in Patmos
Isle,

900

Rose in one solemn Eucharist of praise
To God All-wise, in Christ made manifest.

NOTES TO BOOK VII.

- 1 l. 12. *Israfil*. ‘Four angels appear to be held in high respect by Muhammedans : the angel Gabriel, called the holy spirit ; Michael, the angel of revelation and friend of the Jews ; Azriel, the angel of death ; and Israfeel, the angel of the resurrection.’—Mills’ ‘History of Muhammedanism,’ chap. v.
- 2 l. 13. *Mussulmen*. I am aware that the correct plural of the word Mussulman is Mussulmans, but the latter sound appeared to me too barbarous to be admissible in poetry.
- 3 l. 20. The words used by the Muezzin are, ‘Allah il Allah, Muhammed resoul Allah.’
- 4 l. 124. *To kiss the sacred stone, &c.* The sacred black stone, said to have been brought down by the angel Gabriel, is kept within the Kaaba, or house of the Prophet, which forms the shrine of the great temple of Mecca. To kiss this stone and walk round it seven times, and afterwards to wash in the sacred well of Zemzem, are the chief duties of the Mohammedan pilgrim, to perform which he has travelled perhaps thousands of miles.
- 5 l. 170. *Live on, such ages.* Cf. Virg. Ecl. IV.
‘Talia sæcla,’ suis dixerunt ‘currite’ fusis
Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.
- 6 l. 357. ‘Shed-like roofs,’ says Mr. A. Hare in his ‘Wanderings in Spain,’ ‘enclose the most beautiful building in the world. As you pass the door you are translated from factland to fairy-land.’ ‘The magic touch of the Mussulman,’ says Sir A. Brooke, in his ‘Sketches in Spain,’ ‘is still as fresh as when the colours first glowed from his hand. It may indeed be questioned whether the utmost efforts of modern art

could produce in these days a work so replete with beauty of effect, variety and richness.'

- 7 l. 358. I quote again from Mr. A. Hare : 'From the court you step with bewilderment into a roofed-in forest of pillars, where you can truly lose your way amid the 1000 still remaining columns (there were 1200 once) of varied colour, thickness and material, which divide the building into 29 naves one way and 19 the other.'
- 8 l. 365. *Rock-centred.* In the centre of this famous Mosque is the Sahra rock, which rises 4 to 5 ft. above the pavement. Here, according to tradition, Melchizedec offered sacrifice, Abraham offered up Isaac, Jacob saw his vision, &c. It was also the site of the altar in Solomon's and Herod's temple.
- 9 l. 398. Tamerlane or Timour Lenk, 'the lame man of iron,' and the so-called Mogul dynasty founded by him, were not of Mongolian but of Turkish descent.
- 10 l. 430. The term imám seems to have been originally used only of the descendants of Ali. The last imám was to be the Mahadi (guide) who was to appear at the day of judgment, with Jesus as his lieutenant. See Gibbon, chap. 1. But later on the term came to be used more generally for a priest.
- 11 l. 453. The chief titles of the Sultan are, (1) Khalif, or Vicar of the Prophet, (2) Padishah-Islam, or Emperor of the Mohammedian states, (3) Sultandin, or Protector of the faith, (4) Zil-Ullah, or shadow of God. See Mills, chap. vii.
- 12 l. 487. *The world's fairest town.* Venice and Cairo appear to be the chief rivals of Constantinople for this place of pre-eminence. The city is thus described in the 'Dream of Othman,' learnt by every young Turk : 'Placed at the junction of two seas and two continents, it resembles a noble diamond, set between two sapphire stones and two emeralds, forming the precious jewel of the ring of a vast dominion.' See Dr. C. Taylor's 'Manual of European History.'
- 13 l. 496. In luxury and magnificence Constantinople at the

time of the first Crusade entirely transcended the remaining cities of Europe. It retained at that time, unsullied, all the splendour of Greek and Roman civilization.

14 l. 502. *Long white cloaks.* Black was the colour of the Abbassid, white of the Omnid caliphs. I have adopted white as more characteristic of their sacerdotal dignity. The blue and orange which I have assigned to the Sultans and great Moguls respectively, have not, to my knowledge, any historical significance.

15 l. 506. The Mamelukes ('slaves') were Turks bought and transported to Egypt by the Egyptian caliphs for the protection of their persons, A.D. 1230. The Janizaries (*Yengi cheri* = new soldiers) were Servian and Bosnian captives, first organized by Sultan Amurath, A.D. 1362. They formed the first regular army of Europe.

16 and 17 ll. 524, 525. Mahmoud, the Mohammedan prince who adopted the title of Sultan, was an Oghuze Turk, who founded a short-lived Indian dynasty. He was created by the caliph 'Guardian of the fortune and faith of Mohammed.' Togrul, first powerful prince of the Seljukian dynasty, was invested with the further dignity of 'temporal lieutenant of the Caliph.' This important event in Mohammedan history corresponds very closely with the investiture of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III. The scene is picturesquely described by Mills, ch. iv. After this time the caliphs sunk into mere pontiffs or imáms in Islam. Togrul was a titular, not a dynastic, follower of Mahmoud.

18 l. 603. 'Prayer,' say the Mohammedans, 'will bring a man half-way to God, fasting will bring him to the doors of His palace, and alms will gain him admittance.' Gibbon, ch. 1.

19 l. 654. The so-called 'palace of the thousand and one pillars' is a vast subterranean edifice, built for the purpose of a reservoir by the Greek emperors.

20 l. 684. *Averroes.* A Cordovan, the most eminent of Aris-

totle's Arabian commentators. 'He contributed more,' says Prescott, 'than any other individual to establish the authority of Aristotle over the reason of mankind for so many ages.'

1 l. 758. Siddartha was his proper, Gautana his family name ; Buddha 'the enlightened' being his title. 'From his retreat,' says the chronicle, 'the fame of his meditation and mortification spread abroad like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the skies.' I quote from Dr. Marcus Dods' 'Mahomet, Buddha, and Christ.'

22 l. 839. An Afreet is a devil. A description of a 'rebel Afreet' will be found in Southey's *Thalaba*, xii. 19. The Djinn are genii or fairies.

23 l. 868. The victorious general Amrou wrote thus to the Caliph Omar : 'O commander of the faithful, Egypt is a compound of black earth and green plants . . . adorned according to the vicissitudes of the season with a silver wave, a verdant emerald, or the deep yellow of a golden harvest.' See Gibbon, ch. 1.

BOOK VIII.

Europe, 3.—The Papacy.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord appears before the Pope and Cardinals at St. Peter's, and afterwards at the Vatican meets an assembly of the great Italian painters. He is enthroned as Pontiff in St. Peter's chair, and receives representatives of the various monastic orders. Finally, He is anointed Emperor, and hailed outside the Basilica by an army of crusaders.

'God of the soul, Eternal Spring
Of wisdom, goodness, truth and love !
We hail Thee Lord Most High, and sing
Thy praises with the choir above.

'When sun and stars were wrapt in night,
And darkness brooded o'er the deep,
Thy Breath did kindle life and light,
And woke the universe from sleep.

' When man in pride and vain desire
Had strayed from God and wrought amiss,
Thou didst the prophets' tongues inspire,
And win him back to ways of bliss. 12

' And when the mourning Church was reft
Of Jesus, her ascended Lord,
Thou, only Thou, with men wast left
As heavenly Witness of His Word.

' And still Thy Voice, O Lord of Life^a,
Fount of good thoughts and counsels just,
Above the world's uproar and strife
The simple hear, and hearing trust. 20

' Be near then ; far Thou never art
From them who seek Thee, Lord, aright ;
Fill with Thy Grace the troubled heart,
And to the darkened soul give sight.'

Such hymn, with pomp of red-robed cardinals,
Bishops and acolytes and stolèd priests
Encircled, 'neath the broad and shapely dome,
Built o'er the shrine of Peter, the good Pope
Or sang or prayed, or prayed the while he
sang,

* I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of life.

Kneeling. The vast space of the vaulted nave
From aisle to aisle teemed with a silent throng,
Prostrate in adoration : when at once, 32
Arrayed as Pontiff, with the threefold crown,
And ring, and broidered cope, and lacèd alb,
He Whom they sought—the Church's absent
Head—

(As was aforetime said, ‘The Lord ye seek
Into His Temple suddenly shall come,
Yea He shall come—so saith the Lord of
Hosts,’)

Stood in their midst ; and with right gracious
words

Greeted them, ‘Pax vobiscum.’ Then the
Pope 40

Plucked the tiara from his head, the shoes
From off his feet ; and, doubting not, went
forth

To meet the Great High Priest of Christendom ;
Saying, ‘The sceptre of the Church, and keys
Of heaven and hell, which Thou to Peter once,
And Peter to the Fathers after him
Granted,—I, last of all the illustrious line,
To Christ, Who first bestowed, hereby restore.’

Now, as he spake these words, voices were
heard 49

And rustling wings high in the midmost dome,

As of some ghost indignant, whom the grave
Could not contain, yet laws of God forbade
To join the legion of His living saints.

Then from the confused murmur words at
length

Found shape and utterance. ‘As Hebrews
once,

Captive beside the streams of Babylon,
Mourned for the hill of Zion ; or as stag,
Chased o'er the moor, pants for the cooling
spring ;

So we, sequestered betwixt earth and heaven¹,
Sigh for Thy fellowship, and long once more
To tread with living feet Thy Courts, O God.’ 61
‘Come, if your hearts be ready,’ quoth the
Lord.

Then wreaths of mist out of the liquid air
Took form in wondrous fashion ; as sometimes
In the clear blue, which girds a snow-clad
peak,

Springs up a cloudlet, born from atomies
Of moist invisible vapour, soon the heavens
Are thick with fleecy tufts of mobile gray.

Now from the mist grew faces, cherublike,
Then forms of men entire ; who, from the void
Launched into sudden being and new life,
Lighted beside the lamps of Peter’s tomb. 72

As oft, depicted by great Titian,
Or Rubens, or the gorgeous Veronese,
Angel with outspread wings, or saint is seen,
From the cleft sky descending to our earth ;
So shone these forms, so hovered, and so fell.
Vicars of Christ, born in all times, were they,
Through pride of life debarred from Paradise.
In truth the most part wore the selfsame look
Of will indomitable and stern resolve ; 81
One chiefly, who seemed born to rule his kind,
And trample on the necks of kings : austere
Of look he was, gray-headed, robed in black,
Wearing upon his breast the carvèd sign
Of his Redeemer's Passion. Whom the Pope,
Aghast and terror-stricken, thus bespake :
' Now by the Cross of our most holy Faith,
By Christ, and this His Mother-Church of
Rome,
Speak, I adjure thee ; be thou man or spirit, 90
Or minister of heaven, who thus from night
And incorporeal shade, beyond thy doom,
Hast crossed the threshold of the cheerful
day !
Exound thine errand and declare thy name.'
Him unabashed the sad and stately priest
Thus answered ; ' Pope art thou, and Pope
was I—

Aye twice and three times Pope, not of that sort

Degenerate, which crooks the servile knee
To earthly potentate, but one who bent
Monarch and headstrong Kaiser to my will :
Who ruled the Church, as the first Cæsar
once

101

Mastered the world ; nay more, who reigned,
a priest,

Over the kings of the earth, for at my feet
The Christian emperor ^b bare-footed knelt,
Pleading with tears remission of his sin.
Now, by the Might of Him, before Whose
Face

King, Pope and Emperor are dream and shade,
Once more I open eyes on stars and sun,
Clothed in the flesh I sometime wore ; and
cast

The talents which are His, the sins all mine,
Before the feet of Jesus Christ my Lord.' 111

So spake the prince of priests, great Hildebrand ;

And him the Lord of Glory to His side
Welcomed, and spake him words of kindly
praise.

Next after him came Innocent, whose mild

^b Kaiser Henry IV., at Canossa.

And tranquil countenance concealed a heart
 Fulfilled with daring schemes of high emprise,
 Ambition vast, and more than worldly pride.
 'I am the man,' cried he, 'before whose voice
 Quailed the remorseless spirit of English John,
 What time with sacrilegious hand he seized 121
 Lands and domains, which appertained to
 Christ.'

I laid my curse upon his realm : no mass
 Was heard in church or chantry ; no delight
 Of wreathèd incense sweet, candle, or bell
 Heartened the pious worshipper and brought
 Earth near to heaven ; no sin except the last
 Found absolution : yet the stiff-necked king,
 Tyrant and thief and murderer, heeding not,
 Pursued his lust and rapine, as of old. 130
 Therefore I summoned to our Church's aid
 Philip of France, whose host of armèd knights
 Menaced with fire and sword his fruitful isle,
 And brought the stubborn recreant to my feet.
 Then, bending knee in full submission,
 He yielded crown and realm and royal rights
 Unto the Lord's Vicegerent.'

After him

Came the third Leo, who with sacred oil
 Anointed valiant Charlemain, and placed 139
 The crown of empire on his head, and gave

The keys of Peter's shrine ; that he thenceforth

Might with the Sovereign Pontiff, under God,
(As moon divides heaven's sceptre with the sun),

Rule world and Church with joint authority :
Till Christ should come, sun, moon, and stars
alike

To this dark world, and gather to Himself
All kingly might, all priestly majesty,
One everlasting Pontiff, Lord and King.

'O day,' said he, 'most bright, most glorious !
Day for whose glad, serene epiphany 150
Watching, the saints of God have borne all ills,
War, persecution, famine ; doubts and fears ;
And plague more dread of Hydra-headed
schism !

Yet not in vain : since now the star of morn
Breaks on the long night of two thousand
years ;

And the sweet Voice, once heard in Galilee,
Here in our Rome, where thousands of His
saints

Have won the blessed wreath of martyrdom,—
Here in this royal temple, chief delight, 159
Main glory and huge praise of Christendom,—
Sounds once again, in ears of quick and dead ;

While every stone, responsive, cries aloud,
“ Venite et adorate Dominum.””

Anon the stout unyielding Boniface^c,
Old lion of the Church, thus urged his plea.
‘ Yea, let a solemn Jubilee be held,
And from all tracts of earth let men to Rome
Make pilgrimage ; no longer, as of yore,
Pardon to win from a poor erring priest,
But to behold enthroned the Lord Most High,
And hear from His Divine and gracious Lips
The blessed words of absolution.’

172

After these four came thronging round their
Lord

Of pontiffs old and gray full many a score ;—
Leo, surnamed the Great, whose lofty mien
Awed Genseric the Vandal conqueror,
So that he spared to slay the citizens
Or wreck the city with destroying fire :
Julius^d, the nurse of Raffaelle’s youthful art,
Whose kind and tranquil features yet shine out
On the great painter’s canvas : Paul the third,
Guardian and friend of Michael Angelo : 182
Sixtus^e, who mid the gloomy catacombs
Both reigned and died a martyr for the Faith ;
And he^f, whose rude and stately melodies,

^c Boniface VIII.^d Julius II.^e Sixtus II., A.D. 258.^f Gregory the Great.

Well-heads of Christian music, yet have power
To charm the single-minded, and such souls
As more esteem things noble than things new.
In long close-fitting robes of papal white
They compassed the great dome, or up the
nave

190

Walked penitent ; and some with hands devout
On breast and arms and temples marked the
Cross,
And bowed themselves before the Lord, and
sang,

‘Æterne rex, Jesu piissime,
Inflexis genibus adoramus Te.’

Those chiefly, who in pride of worldly power
Waxed wanton, dared to barter for man’s dross
The priceless gold of Christ, and left His
Church

A prey to wolves of schism and heresy ;—
Those too, who honoured Mary more than
Him,

200

And wove vain webs of fond invention
Round the pure Faith delivered to His saints,
Now saw their madness, and with downcast
eyes

Approached the Master.

Then the Lord of heaven,
Chief Bishop of our souls, to Whom all things

In earth and under the earth bow and obey³,—
Up the wide stairs, beneath the baldachin,
Which on its lofty shafts of twisted bronze
Bestrides the great High Altar, with slow
steps

Mounted and stood :—not such as Michael
once

210

Pictured ; inflamed with wrath, and hurling
swift

Legions of damnèd spirits to endless woe⁴ :
But more resembling that sublimer Shape
Of the Everlasting Father, which looks down
From the high ceiling of the Sistine Church,
Wrapt in a mantle, and with outspread arms
Parting the primal Powers of Night and Day.
For all the mystery and infinity
Of Him, Who was when Time and Space were
not,

Shone in His Face ; and like the far-off sound
Of many waters, heard at evening still, 221
His Voice woke echoes in the silent aisles.

‘ My children, guardians of My Faith and
Name,

By whom the Lamp I kindled in old days
Was through the long dark ages, and the
years

Of doubtful twilight fed and nourishèd

I praise your zeal and love, and from your hands

Take back the Church, which ye have ruled and saved.

O royal Priesthood, whose unbroken line
Girdles the centuries ; and binds the world —
A chaos else of jarring tribes and tongues,— 231
From Christ Which was to Christ Who once more is !

What though the stiff-necked emperors of the East

Spurned your dominion, and no words availed
To heal the gaping breach in the body of Christ :—

What though, when knowledge waxed, and faith grew dim,

Clouded with schemes of vain philosophy,

Your sceptre and your high prerogative

By many a dreaming zealot were usurped :

What though a rival Church, which loved ye not, 240

Sprung from your bowels, and from East to West

Spread forth her branches, following the march
Of the wide empire, which she helped to win :
Yet through the long tale of the Church's fate
Yours is the foremost place ; to you belong

The spiritual headship and supremacy.
On Peter, as the golden words proclaim
Blazoned up yonder in your airy dome,
My Church was founded ; and no gates of
hell,

Nor powers of the world, nor wide-spread
heresy

250

Shall e'er prevail against it. Therefore now
Among the three great Churches, which yet
look

To the true Fountain-head for strength and
life,

Yours hath the widest and the firmest sway.'

With that He took the bread, and blessed the
wine ;

Standing before the golden candlesticks,
Crowned as High-Priest ; and raised in hand
outstretched

The blessed wafer and the sacred cup ;
And cried aloud, 'O God of Abraham,
Isaac and Israel, Lord of heaven and earth,
God of the spirits of all flesh ! let now

261

The Bread and Wine, which here I consecrate,

Preserve the souls and bodies of all these
Unto Eternal Life.' But they in joy,
With mingled fear, fell at His Feet as dead,

Nor dared to lift the accustomed hymn of praise.

At last old Hildebrand, and after him
The concourse of assembled priests took heart ;
And thus, though changed in words, in spirit
the same,

Sang the great Hymn, wherewith the Church
adores⁵

The Body and the Blood of Christ her Lord.

‘Body, for our sins once offered
On the Cross at Calvary ;
Heart, that for our sakes once suffered
Bitter wrong and misery ;
Soul, which o’er the Grave victorious
Freed us from Hell’s slavery !
Grant us at Thine Advent glorious
With Thy Saints the victory.’

Now o’er the darkening minster shades of
night

Increasing fell ; and soon the vast confines
Of Peter’s fane yet vaster and more huge
Showed, in the glimmering tapers’ dim twi-
light.

Meanwhile within the spacious porticoes
Of the outer court, of red-robed cardinals

Assembled many a score,—wise men, whose
wit

Outweighed, in court and council, the mere
strength

Of camp-bred statesmen and illiterate kings.

Wolsey of English Henry, Richelieu

Of the French Louis chosen councillor ; 290

Pandulph, the imperious legate, too, was there ;

Shrewd Mazarin, and warlike Ximenes ;

Lanfranc, who braved the conquering Norman
Prince ;

And Stephen Langton, whose undaunted zeal
Won our Great Charter from the unwilling
John.

Whom,—through the well-filled nave marching
afoot,

And mounting to that famous balcony,

Which overlooks the stone-y-paven court,

And the great obelisk and the fountains twain,—

The Lord dismissed with gracious words of
Peace. 300

Then to the Vatican His steps He turned,
Guided by Paul and Julius. Round the porch
And up the royal staircase a glad band
Of painters old and young saluted Him.
Came foremost a bright youth, fair to behold,

With long thick hair about his archèd brows
Circling, and dark wide-open eyes, which saw,
As none before had seen, none after him,—
Saw, and in living colours showed to man 309
The glory and loveliness of Christ our King.
Who cried, ‘O Face, whose lineaments divine
I sought through lifetime, finding not! Full
oft,
When I essayed to paint Thee Perfect Man,
That look intense of far divinity,
That beauty, mixed, as in none other form,
With strength and wit and goodness—baffled
me,
Until I shrank despairing from my task.
In guileless boyhood only could I trace
Some dim reflection of Thy Deity.
Therefore as Child upon Thy Mother’s lap, 320
Or to her bosom clasped, or raised in arm,
Or lying infantwise at length outstretched⁶,
I drew Thee ever and again. And once
In that my picture, where Madonna stands
Bearing her Son amid enwreathèd clouds⁸,
(All Europe knows it, but the Saxons own,) That sad presageful Look, of One foredoomed
Through His own death to save our ruined
race,

⁶ The Madonna di San Sisto.

Flashed on my thought and gave my pencil wings.

At length, when time waxed short, for mortal powers 330

Brooked not the unceasing strain of heart and mind,

I gathered all my soul into my hand ;
That, like the swan, who sings his sweetest note
Dying, one work I might to man bequeath ^h,
Which should, in all Its strength and depth and height,

Show forth the Glory of Thy Countenance.

In yonder chamber, Lord, the picture dwells ;
And many an ardent soul hath gazed thereon,
Nor stinted praise unthinking : yet I know
That Michael's Father has more majesty, 340
And the Venetian's Christ a mystery,
Wisdom and depth, my picture never reached.'

So spake he : and his peer in fame, though less

In grace and beauty, Michael Angelo,
Drew near, and wondering did regard his Lord.
A dark-haired man was he, with mouth compressed,

Stern eyes and rugged face : more power than love,

^h The 'Transfiguration.'

Less ruth than justice on his brow was writ.
Yet truly, if pure art may win for man
The heroic wreath, the princely diadem, 350
Hero and prince was he ; who planned and
built
The hugest of all temples, old or new ;
Who wrought in stone not all unworthily
Of great Athenian Phidias ; who pourtrayed
The sufferings of man, the reign of God,
Tumultuous passion, godlike self-control,
As none whose pencil, since the world was
young,
Has taught or terrified or charmed mankind.
Kneeling, he cried abashed, ‘Thou art not, Lord,
Such as I deemed Thee. In the church hard
by, 360
Where worship the Dominicansⁱ, the Christ
Of my poor fancy dwells, and to all time
Shames me. For pity on His face indeed,
And love and infinite sadness are expressed ;
But ah ! the fire of genius, and the force
Of iron resolution, strong to tame
The leaguèd powers of hell,—these wholly want.
Still once, if only once, I fashioned Thee
More than mere man, and worthy to be God.
Thou know’st the statue, Lord ; ’tis now the joy

ⁱ S. Maria sopra Minerva.

Of ancient Bruges, Venice of the North ; 371
 Hooded and mantled sits the Maid, and Thou
 In Thy strong innocent boyhood standest near.
 But could I to the strength invincible,
 Which arms my Moses, add the patient grace
 Of my young Captive, whom all Paris loves,
 And blend therewith the passion of my Christ ;
 There were an image that might awe the world.'

He said ; and signed that Titian should come
 near,

Titian, whose bold lines and harmonious hues
 Dazzle the mind with wonder ;—Titian, prince
 Of painters, if all-highest fame be his, 382
 Who doth attain most nearly highest end.
 For never through ripe manhood shone the God ;
 Never were grace and beauty mixed so well
 With lofty will, and deep, unfathomed thought,
 As in that picture, which the world admires^j,
 But less than is its due, wherein the Lord
 Turns on the Hebrew tempter, and his coin
 The deep scorn of His wise and searching Eye.

But he, with doubtful look, as one amazed
 With too much honour, hearkened not straight-
 way,

Pleading, ‘ To Leonard’s head, and not to mine,
 Belongs the third wreath in our shrine of fame.

^j The ‘Zinsgroschen’ or ‘tribute-money’ at Dresden.

Then Leonard gently linked within his own
The great Venetian's arm, and side by side
Walked with his famous peer to greet the Lord.
'O Thou,' said he, 'before Whose sentence bow
Poet and prince and painter, be Thou judge
Betwixt us.' Said the Lord, 'I love ye twain,
Nor least, that other's fame to each is dear. 401
Yet, would ye know My mind ; since highest
aim

Not alway sureliest cleaves the mark ; perchance
His art excels, who drew Me best as Child.
In the great palace, which o'erlooks the Seine,
There hangs a famous picture, all men know^k,
Where mid the blue light of enchanted rocks
Jesus the Child,—whose gentle thoughtfulness
Mars not the fair grace of His infant Brow,—
Stretches the Hand to bless His cousin John.
Such height My Titian's art attained not.' 411

These four came first, but no ignoble band
Walked in their rear : Giorgione brave and
young,

Like his fair youth, whose golden face adorns
The palace of the Kaisers^l ;—Francia mild,
Whose mournful angels, o'er their Master dead
Watching, breathe depth of sorrow so divine,

^k *La Vierge aux rochers.*

^l 'Head of a youth' in the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna.

That the rapt gazer bows and bares the head ^m ;
 Bellini too, whose Virgins, draped in blue,
 Shed o'er the churches of his native town ⁿ 420
 Strange glory : none so skilled as he, to paint
 The sober grace of saintly womanhood.
 Not far stood Perugino, who first taught
 Young Raffaelle's wings to soar ; and he who
 drew

Never so well, as when he drew himself,
 Andrea, not unknown in English song ^o .
 Thou, too, Correggio, on whose canvas meet
 Alternate gloom and splendour, subtly mixed,
 Camest, a dark sad man without a smile :
 And thou of all the Italian family 430
 Father ^p, whose grave Madonna charms us yet,
 Clad in her flowing wealth of purple robe.
 How shall I number all the illustrious line,
 Who, born in later times, when faith had lost
 The magic of her youth, yet handed on
 The torch, once lit by their immortal sires ?—
 Thee, sweet Murillo, in whose childish Christ ^q
 Is boyhood more than human, scarce divine ?
 Thee, Rembrandt, mighty seer, before whose
 mind

Rose, as in vision, the great scenes of old, 440

^m ‘Dead Christ’ in the National Gallery. ⁿ Venice.

^o Cimabue. ^p ‘Holy Family’ in the National Gallery.

Not tricked with sensuous hues, but haled
alive

In all their wonder and wild mystery,
And spread before the trembling gazer's eye ?
Or thee, great German Holbein, than whom
none

E'er painted maid more queenly, Child more
fair^q ?

Before the Lord the august procession swept,
Each as He called them ; then, defiling slow,
Moved towards the lofty shrine^r, whose storied
roof

Glows with the thoughts of God and works of
man,

Wrought by the hand of patient Angelo. 450
There kneeling, they gave thanks to Highest
God,

For that their bodies by His Grace from thrall
Of death were loosened, and their souls made
fresh

In the restorèd Kingdom of His Son.

Now night, advancing, spread her sable
plumes

Over the seven-hilled City ; but untired
In the great corridors with hymns of praise
Exulted and rejoiced the wakeful throng.

^q Madonna and Child at Dresden. ^r The Sistine Chapel.

The vast circumference of Peter's dome
Was decked with thousand lanterns, which broke
out,

460

Kindled at once by thousand eager hands,
At the hour of midnight into sudden blaze.
Nor wanted such delights as later art
Knows to contrive,—cascades of tinted fire,
Sky-cleaving rockets, showers of rainbow hues,
And wheels, and shooting balls of noisy flame.
At length, when all the fiery carnival
Had vanished into smoke, the joyous crowd
Hied homeward; but the dome for many an
hour

Shone, like a huge crystalline pyramid 470
Hung by the fairies betwixt earth and sky.

When morning dawned, within the Royal
Hall

The Lord held solemn conclave: all the popes
And famous Cardinals of the olden time
Were there assembled, Peter in their midst,
Bearing the mystic Keys of heaven and hell.
Of whom electing twelve,—good Sixtus first,
And last ill-fated Pius, from whose hands
The sceptre of the Eternal City fell,—
Our Lord, as when His earthly pilgrimage 480
Drew near its fateful close, with napkin girt⁸,

Went round, and washed His new disciples' feet.
Then did they march, with pomp pontifical,
Once more to Peter's fane ; beholding which,
They spoke the triumph of their hearts in
song.

'O glorious temple of the living God,
Who can express thy beauty, who thy strength ?
Thy front is like some perpendicular cliff ;
Thy pillars are as pine-trees, which invest
The bleak side of some ancient hill ; thy dome,
Like an aërial castle, flouts the sky. 491
Nay more—of shrines throughout our Christian
world

Mother art thou and mistress : in thy midst
Through ages long the Vicars of the Lord
Have with due rites renewed the Sacrifice,
Once made for man's redemption. Crown art
thou,

Metropolis, imperial corner-stone,
Navel and very core of Christendom.

All hail ! ' So sang they, buoyed with Roman
pride,

Imputing grace which was not ; since the fane
Appals the mind with mass and majesty, 501
Takes not the soul with beauty. Then the
Lord,

Loving their childish, fond enthusiasm,

Clothed the huge temple with the grace it lacked.

Into fair clustered columns the uncouth piers Bloomed ; the dull roof with bright mosaic shone,

And each unlovely lattice brake at once
Into rich lines of branched tracery ;
While to its crowning lantern the great dome
Gleamed, like the chalice of some new-blown flower,

510

With crimson leaves, on other each embossed,
Darkened with purple shade, and freaked with gold.

So, when they gained the threshold, and the shrine

In his new-gotten splendour stood revealed,
Then truly did they shout in extreme joy,
'Lauderis, exalteris, Domine,

Ob Magnificentiam Tuam et Gloriam !'

Now they prepare a purple canopy,
Rich velvet, starred with gems ; and, robed themselves

519

In pall, and cope and cassock, lead their Lord,
Mid lights and cloud of odorous frankincense,
Through the long nave to Peter's ancient chair.
Here they enthroned their heavenly Chief, and low

Bending in duteous homage, kissed His Feet ;
And hailed Him Pontiff, of the Church which is,
Which was, which ever shall be Súpreme Head.

But now a tramp, as of some mighty host
Marching to war, without the temple's gates
Sounded. Anon through transept, aisle, and
nave

529

Streamed a great multitude of cowlèd friars,
Marshalled by one, with saintly visage mild,
Who bare an ivcry Crucifix in hand,
And on the piteous Face, graven thereon,
Fixed the deep passion of his upturned eyes.
St. Francis he,—in mediæval tale
Much famed, who conversed with the trees and
waves,

Calling them brethren. On his hands and feet
(Whether long meditation on the Wounds
Of his dear Lord left impress on his flesh,
Or whether Christ, in sign of fellowship, 540
These marks bestowed,) dint of transfixing
nails,

As on the Saviour's form, were manifest.
'Tis said that, while he lifted eyes in prayer
Upon the Figure of Christ crucified,
The gracious Face once downward from the
Cross

Bent, and the living Eyes All-merciful
 Beamed on their gentle worshipper. The tale
 Murillo heard, and with believing heart
 Told it on canvas, that all men might know⁹.
 Once likewise, as at mass he ministered, 550
 The Saint, who bore on tablets of his heart
 His Master's image graved continually,
 Found resting in his arms the Holy Child.

Behind their captain brethren numberless,
 Clad in coarse grey, barefooted, bald of crown,
 Came flocking: at their right the 'hounds of God' ^s,
 Black-habited from cowlèd head to foot,
 Led by their founder Dominic; a band
 Well-skilled to track, and with remorseless fang
 Destroy the insidious forms of heresy. 560
 Much zeal they had, less pity: therefore now
 In ruth for cruel acts, unworthy Christ,
 Wrought for the Church, with heads abased they
 came,
 Chanting a mournful psalm of penitence.
 Marched to the left a sad-eyed, sober throng
 Of Benedictines; robed in mantles black,
 Clasped at the neck above their cassocks white.
 Monks of the good old type, not friars, were they,
 Who loved prayer more than preaching. Far
 removed

^s Dominici, or 'Domini canes.'

From earth's distracting glitter and turmoil, 570
They, neither serfs nor soldiers, as all else,
Studied, and prayed, and fasted and gave alms,
Of art and knowledge through long centuries
The sole interpreters. Nor deem their life
Madness or misery; for to them belonged
The lamp of Truth and splendid heritage
Of bygone greatness: ministers were they
Of earth's most potent monarch, channels too
Of heavenly Grace from the great Fountain Christ.
What flowers of genius in that sheltered soil 580
Sprung not? What boasted fabric of late days
With the fair minsters, builded by their aid,
In strength or beauty can compare? What book,
Adorned and graven with our utmost art,
Can match those monuments of patient skill,
The missals,—with their wealth of burnished
gold,
Their rich design, their deep and lustrous hues,
Their fine-drawn charactery? What noise of
tongues,
Or din of iron wheels mechanical 589
Can equal the sweet peace, the duteous joy,
The calm monotony of their buried lives?
Lauds, matins, vespers, compline,—and again
Matins and vespers:—but the words they sang,
Drawn from the Very Source of Life and Light,

Bloomed ever, like the sun and starry heavens,
Fresh with delight and immortality.

Two bands came next, in raiment white
attired^t,

Led by the saintly Bernard, whose bold voice
A second time woke Europe from her trance,
To wrest from heathen hands the tomb of Christ.
Marched after these yet others, with white capes
Over their sable tunics meetly thrown 602

Named after great Augustine; in whose midst
Appeared the gross and resolute round face
Of German Luther. Whom beholding thus,
Leo, the pope^u, yet mindful of the Bull
Once roughly by his rebel hands assailed,
Much marvelled; doubting if the same were he,
Whose lawless tongue had set the world afire.
Him therefore Hildebrand with stern regard
Thus questioned, 'Art thou, then, the apostate
monk, 611

Whose voice made havoc in the Church of God?
And darest thou sans absolution
Indue that sacred robe thou hast disgraced,
Flaunting thy sin before the Church and Christ?
To whom bold Luther, making honest speech,
'The times were evil: lust of power and wealth
Consumed the heart and soul of Christendom.

^t The Carthusians and Cistercians.

^u Leo X.

For perishable gold the ambitious popes
Bartered the right of pardon, and betrayed 620
Their priestly office. What was I, say ye,
That I should cleave in twain the spouse of
Christ,

And beard his lawful Vicar? Nay, but God
Spake by my voice, and sent me to rebuke
Sin in high places. True, I recked not, I,
How my new Christian company, when once
Its zeal had waxen cold, would quickly shrink
To a poor shadow of the Church which was.
Yet was the work of God : it broke the chain
Of papal domination, set mankind 630
On a new path with gladdened souls and free ;
Gave to the Church new strength, to Christ new
power.

Now that Himself the Lord, for Whom we
watched

Through the long centuries, appears once more,
And stands within His temple here at Rome ;
Our long estrangement of three hundred years
Avails not longer : be henceforward peace
North, East, and West within His earthly
realm

Under the heavenly Pontiff.' So he spake ;
And Christ, receiving his submission meek, 640
Welcomed the wanderer back into His fold.

Came last a careworn band, whose straitened
brow

Bare impress more of craft than sanctity.

No girdled gown, nor hooded cloak wore they,
But the plain habit of a Christian priest.

The chief who marshalled them, of look austere,
Dark and intractable,—was Loyola,
Their founder and first General. Seeing these,
The great reformer's countenance was changed,
And sparks of rage flashed from his wrathful
eyes : 650

For by their aid the seed heretical,
Sown by himself, in Austria, France and Spain
Was crushed to rise no more. 'Ah cursèd
race !

Ah brood of vipers !' cried he, 'seed of hell !
Blush ye then not, your hands and hearts imbrued
With guiltless blood from thousands of His
Saints,

To look the Lord of pity in the face ?

Hie to the catacombs, if lower depth

Be not your fiery portion, and there hide

In everlasting penance your deep shame.' 660

To whom the Jesuit chief, with face unmoved,
Dauntless and fierce: 'Full many a soul we
saved,

Dealing brief agony, from flames of hell.

Ye fawn and smile, and shield from earthly
pain

Souls, whom your hearts consign to endless
woe.

Blind guides, false prophets are ye. Think ye,
then,

That He to Whom all thoughts are manifest,
Knows not the poison which infects your
smile?

Was it for nought, moreover, that our Church
Was smitten and rent asunder? That fair
shrines, 670

Reared by our great forefathers' piety,
Were wrecked and pillaged by your impious
hands?

Was it for nought that the Apostolic powers,
The words of doom and blessing, were usurped
By lips unsanctified? Arise, O Lord,
Show Who Thou art at length, and whose are
Thine.'

As mid opposing currents stands a rock
On firm foundation, whilst around his base
Idly the swirling billows fume and fret;
So Christ the strife of their untempered tongues
Heard, but to neither side did all incline. 681
At last, 'The Church of your restorèd King
Needs not,' said He, 'the warfare of your wits.'

As in the mystic TRINITY One God
 Shines with Three Several Faces, yet remains
 Eternal, Undivided, Ever One :
 So let My Church, on one Foundation built
 Of Christ and His Apostles, yet preserve
 Such form, as place or custom hath made dear,
 Here Roman, there Greek, English ;—holding
 still

One Faith, One Lord, One Baptism, One God
 And Father of all ; Who, working by One
 Spirit, 692

Shall interfuse and penetrate each part
 With Grace divine and inward harmony.'

Thus, loving both, yet well aware how lacked
 Mercy in these, in those obedience,
 Spake the Sweet Reason of the Incarnate Word.
 Then, borne above the shoulders of His Popes,
 Through chancel and through nave betwixt the
 ranks

Of kneeling friars He passed, and as He went
 Blessed them ; embracing the whole Latin
 Church,— 701

All members, far or near, alive or dead,—
 With the Divine expansion of His Love.

‘O Church, unchanging as Thy Sovran Head,
 And glorious most in thine unchangingness !
 O great sonorous rhythm of chanted prayer !

Dear splendid rites, which lift dull earth to heaven,

Drown every doubt, and melt the soul in God !

Almost a part ye seem of that divine,

Stedfast, unwearying Order, which imparts 710

Ever the same sweet music to the sea,

Holds the moon faithful to her course, and wheels

The wandering orbs of night around their sun.

Let the majestic worship of My sons,

The music of their solemn Sacrifice

Sound in My temples ; and the perfumed cloud

Rise to the Father's Throne for evermore !

Nor lay aside the sad, mysterious Sign

Of your betrayed Redeemer ; nor with fire

Burn the Similitudes of your absent King, 720

Having at length Himself : but let His Ear

Catch the direct voice of your prayer and praise,

Unmediated by Mother-Maid or Saint.

Awake, bride of the Lord, and put on strength !

Pluck from thy heart all worship save of Him,

Who is thy Head ; and once again stand out

Amid the obedient realms of Christendom

Courageous, simple-hearted, clothed anew

With the arms of God and wedding-robe of Christ.

Then shall the kings of the earth bow down
once more 730
Before thy shrine, and queens once more rejoice
To deck with costly work thy sanctuaries^v.
Then shall united Europe bring her gifts,
And the whole world render obeisance
To the chief Bishop, Christ ; Who holds the
Keys,
And wields the Crook, and wears the triple
Crown¹⁰,
Prophet, High Priest and Monarch of mankind.'

But when He stood without the temple's
porch,
Fronting the great arcade, whose inmost wings
Embrace the mighty minster's feet ; behold, 740
The whole vast space was filled with a great
throng,
A sea of upturned faces numberless,
Haled from all tracts of earth, from purging fires,
And from the blissful fields of Paradise :—
Souls of all ages ; who, mid good report
And evil, swerving from the faith no jot,
Clung constant to the Holy, Well-beloved,
One, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

^v Psalm lxviii. 29.

There knelt or stood they, till the day waxed dim,

Watchful, and wrestled with the Lord in prayer,— 750

As if the penitence and agony
Of all the Lents in all the Christian years
Into those hours were centred and compressed,—
Casting the huge load of their ancient sins,
Rapine, rebellion, murders, cruelties,
Low at the Mercy-seat of Christ their Judge.
On the high steps meanwhile, both arms out-spread,

As Aaron when the tribes of Israel fought,
Stood the Divine Absolver ; offering up
Before the Invisible Altar of High God, 760
Wrapped in His own strong Tears and Passion,
The dear oblation of His children's prayer.
And as the shades increased, lo, from His Form

Rays of unearthly Light, ineffable,
Glanced, and His raiment shone as driven snow,
Smit by the moonbeams ; till the enormous fane,
The square, and every kneeling worshipper
(As it was writ by faithful John, ' In heaven
Need they no candle neither light of the sun,

God being Light thereof,) waxed luminous 770
 With rays reflected from their Lord. Nay too,
 The very stars seemed to relume their fires,
 And the white moon to trim her silver flame
 From that One Glorious Figure. Then the men
 Looked up, and knew their own and Nature's
 God,
 Knew too their sin forgiven ; and cried aloud,—
 As when a great wave, arched to its full height,
 Breaks thunderous, lashing all the rocks with
 spray,—

'Ave Deus, Salvator hominum :
 Rex Regum, Dominorum Domine !
 Tibi sit laus in omnia sæcula.'

780

When dawned the morrow's sun, and nones
 were said,
 From church to church, in state pontifical,
 The Master rode ; restoring what rude hands
 Had marred, and conjuring to life again
 The forms of antique grace and dignity.
 Now to the Lateran's time-honoured pile,
 And now to San Clemente, where beneath
 The piers and arches, reared by later hands,
 Moulder the relics of an earlier shrine : 790
 Anon to Mary's temple on the hill ^w,

^w S. Maria Maggiore.

Rich with the sepulchres of ancient Popes,
And shafts of porphyry, and the fabled boards
Of the rude manger, where the Saviour lay,
He rode triumphally ; while Hildebrand
Bare the great jewelled Cross, and Francis held
The bridle of His palfrey. Thus the day
Wore on, till every bell-tower glimmered red
In the resplendence of the parting sun.

Then in glad progress with His saints marched
He

800

Unto the Church, y-clept ‘Altar of Heaven,’
Perched on the summit of Rome’s central
hill ;

Whence the long Tiber, and Soracte’s height,
The battlemented Castle^x, the great Dome,
And the long palace of the Popes is seen.
Here, to adore the Head of Christendom,
Came Christian princes of each age and land,
Kaisers and Kings,—a goodly company. 808
Sceptre and crown before His Feet they laid,
And sang a new song to their Master’s praise.

‘ Priest of the world ! Whose potent intercession
Melts into ruth the Father’s frown !
Waft in Thy golden censer our confession,
Shower on our souls Thine influence down.

* Castle of S. Angelo.

Kaisers and kings were we,
But in the sight of Thee,
 All-Wise, All-Just !
Our crowns are vanity,
Our thrones are dust.

'Priest! with Thy Cross of endless glory
christen 820

820

The dull brows of our dim humanity :
King ! make our hearts and lives unkingly
glisten

With Thy divine and perfect Royalty.

Kaisers and kings were we,

Then shade and dust.

Glorious Trinity,

Grant us at length to be,

bathed in the Light of
Blameless and just'

At length the season of His long sojourn 830
In Rome the mighty, Rome the glorious,
Rome, the great mother of the Christian states,
As mistress of the old,—drew near its close.
Behoved it now to traverse in due course
The cities of the fair peninsula ;
And, piercing the great wall of snow-capt hills,
Which guard the plains of Italy, to fare

Northward, as fared the Christian Emperors,
Armed with their high commission from the
Popes.

But first, that all might rightly be fulfilled, 840
He called a council under the broad dome
Of Peter's church ; and with such words ad-
dressed

The august assembly : ‘ Fathers of the Church,
Pontiffs and prelates and canónized saints !
From your far-famèd City, from the land
Of priests and painters, to less clement skies,
Over the bulwarks of your ice-bound Alps,
I make My way. The keys and sacred crown
Awhile I render to your faithful hands.

Meantime, as Cæsar, with the valiant men, 850
Who with the Paynim fought in days of old,
I go the Holy Empire to renew.’

Thereat before the tabernacle He knelt,
And, being anointed with the sacred oil,
Endued the imperial mantle, alb and stole¹¹ ;
(White is the stole, well-wrought with golden
thread,

White too the curious alb, with cloth of gold
Wide-bordered ;) next the consecrated lance
Took He in hand ; and, placed in throne of
state,

Received obeisance from the anointing priest.

High shone the sun in heaven, when once
again 860

Appearing at the temple's gates, He viewed,
Stretched far as eye could reach, an armèd host
Of steel-clad cavaliers,— counts, margraves,
dukes,

Princes, and crownèd kings, and emperors.

Not such a host upon the field of Mars

Saluted mighty Julius : nor more brave

In feats of arms, and warlike high emprise,

That which at Issus and Arbela's plain

Smote the vain luxury of Persia's King. 870

For all the flower of Christian chivalry

Thither that morn was gathered. As the sky

Sparkles with myriad points of golden sheen,

In winter seasons clear, what time the moon

Hides her bright head, and frost invests the
ground ;

So with steel lance, and shield, and vizored
helm,

And dazzling panoplies, inwrought with gold,

Shone all the square, and every street and lane

Betwixt old Tiber and the Vatican.

And as when mighty hall or théâtre 880

Is filled from roof to basement with dense
throng

Of ardent citizens, who wait to hear

The voice of some great speaker, whom they
love;

Doubtful they scan each comer; but when he,
Their own consummate actor, mounts the stair,
They rise, and with reiterated shout
Speak their applause: so, when the sacred gates
Stood open, and the Lord of Life and Love,—
He, for Whose cause they bled; the Mighty
One,

Who vanquished Death, and for all faithful
souls

890

Paved a broad road from earth to Paradise,—
Fronted their gaze; the warrior host forthwith
Brake into tumult of high joy and praise.

Now, that the blessing of the Church might
rest

On all her dauntless champions; in long line,
With candles and with Cross processional,
Advanced the assembled popes and cardinals,
Bearing the Host, Which sight the fearful
throng

Hailed with bent knee and whispered prayer
devout.

Then through the gates the glittering caval-
cade,—

900

Nation by nation, tribe by tribe,—with song

And shout, swept onward ; led by Christ Himself,

(Whose mail throughout was tempered gold ;
His helm

Likewise of gold, with crest of eagles twain,
Whence plumes of horsehair nodded fearfully :)
While, clear above loud horn and shout of men,
Sounded the voice, whereto they once gave heed,
Of the good hermit Peter : 'On brave hearts,
Who fight no more for empty sepulchre,
Nor to a God invisible in the heavens 910
Lift hands in prayer ! Behold, the Lamb of God,
Slain, risen, to heaven ascended, leads you on
To share His realm ; making His Bride the
Church

Heir of His fame, all earth His Holy Land.'

NOTES TO BOOK VIII.

1 l. 58. *Sequestered betwixt earth and heaven.* Cf. Browning's 'Ring and the Book,' The Pope.

'in that dim obscure sequestered state,
Where God unmakes, but to remake the soul,
He else had made in vain.'

2 l. 164. I owe some apology not only to Dante, but in a certain sense to myself, for thus distinguishing this ambitious pontiff. Dante (*Inferno* xix.) places him, as it is well known, in a very low place; and I have described one of his evil deeds (Bk. viii. 55). But with all his faults he remains one of the stoutest champions of the Church, while the cruel circumstances of his death, and the brave way in which he met his end, seem to palliate, if not to atone for, his worst crime.

3 l. 205. '*To Whom all things . . . bow and obey.*' These words are from the Collect, 'The Almighty Lord,' in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick.

4 l. 212. The reference is to the Figure of Christ in the picture of the Last Judgment, painted over the Altar in the Sistine chapel. The 'Sublimer Shape,' referred to in the following line, is an earlier work of the same Master.

5 l. 270. *The great Hymn*, 'Ave verum Corpus, natum De Maria Virgine!' I have attempted to preserve the peculiar quadruple rhyme of the original hymn.

6 l. 322. The references are, 1) to 'La Seggiola' at Florence; 2) to the 'Madonna di Tempi' at Munich; 3) to the 'Vierge au voile' at Paris.

- 7 l. 426. The picture is in our National Gallery—the poem in Browning's 'Men and Women.'
- 8 l. 481. A portion of this napkin is supposed to be preserved in the treasury of the Hofburg at Vienna.
- 9 l. 549. I once saw this picture for sale at the old British Association, but do not know what has since become of it. The incident in the following lines is depicted by Giotto in one of a series of small pictures, illustrating the life of St. Francis.
- 10 l. 736. *The triple Crown.* It may be interesting to some readers to know that the papal tiara, which was originally almost plain, though always distinct in shape from the mitre, received its first crown from Boniface VIII., its second from Benedict XII. in 1335, its third from John XXIII. in 1411.
- 11 l. 855. *Mantle, alb and stole.* These ancient insignia, along with the famous Crown of the Holy Roman Empire, and the lance, are all preserved among the Crown treasures at Vienna. The lance is called the lance of St. Maurice, and is supposed to date from the time of the Merovingian kings. The handle contains, fastened down by a gold plate, a nail from the 'True,' or at any rate the Helenean Cross. The emperors are said to have turned the scale of battle on several occasions by the use of it.

General Note. As some English Churchmen may think that I have assigned to Papacy and the Popes too high a place in Universal History, I here append two passages upon this subject from the pen of Cardinal Newman.

'No one but a Master, who was a thousand bishops in himself at once, could have tamed and controlled, as the Pope did, the great and little tyrants of the middle age.' 'It is generally confessed now, even by Protestant historians, that concentration of ecclesiastical power in those centuries was simply necessary for the civilization of Europe.'—*Letter to the Duke of Norfolk.*

TRANSLATIONS.

1. 163. ‘Come and adore the Lord.’
1. 194. ‘Eternal King, most gracious Jesu, on bended knees we adore Thee.’
1. 516. ‘Be Thou praised, be Thou exalted, O Lord, for Thy Magnificence and Thy Glory.’
1. 779. ‘Hail, O God, Saviour of mankind, King of Kings and Lord of Lords ! To Thee be praise throughout all ages.’

BOOK IX.

Europe, 33. The Empire, 3.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord leaves Rome in the company of the Crusaders, and visits in turn Florence, Milan, and Venice, passing thence through Switzerland to Vienna.

SAY, then, sweet Spirit, (or be thou rightlier named

Angel of God,) who at the Cross of Christ
Heardest the Seven Last Words, and didst receive

Thy Master's breath, with bright wings ministerant

And mild eyes beaming o'er the accursèd Tree,—
Say thou,—the Cross is doubtless all thy theme,—

Who first amid the knightly cavalcade,
Bound to that glorious service, rode to field
After his Sovereign? Was it Tancred bold,
Sung by Italian Tasso, whose renown 10
Was noised through Europe and the sacred East?

Was it the might of Godfrey, Salem's king ?
Brave Baldwin of Byzantium ? saintly Louis ?
Or the red-bearded German emperor ?
Or was it rather he, whose fearful name
Full oft by Syrian mothers was invoked
To awe their babes withal, the flower and
pride

Of all the hosts who fought beneath the Cross,
Richard the lion-hearted English king ?

First of the warlike chiefs of Christendom 20
Rode mighty Richard, with his brave array
Of stalwart Englishmen ; while mid the ranks
Came Edward, bold and wise, whose poisoned
wound

Was healed by Eleanor, his faithful queen.
The Germans next, led by that tower of
strength

Frederic, old champion of his light-haired race.
Him the belated countrymen oft-times
Or sees, or thinks he sees, wandering at large
Amid the dense leaves of his Suabian wood,
Smit by the silver arrows of the moon ^a. 30
Came next a band, white-mantled, with red cross
On the left shoulder blazoned, but beneath
Armed cap-à-pie with breastplate, greaves, and
helm.

* Frederic Barbarossa.

The Templars they,—half warrior and half monk,

Sworn servants of the Cross ; who wed no wife,
Nor courted vain delights of bower or hall,
Yet with the foremost in war's sterner field
Drew bow, raised battle-axe, or tilted lance.

Jacques de Molay, their last and greatest chief,
Rode at their head, whose brow yet bare the marks

40

Dealt by the scorching flames of martyrdom.
For when, much favoured by the sovereign popes,

The valiant Order had, in power and wealth,
Waxed mighty, branching wide, like fruitful tree,

Through all the lands of Europe ; lust and spite,—

Lust of their wealth, and envy of their strength,—
Filled the mean spirit of Philip^b, King of France.

Who straightway haled, and did with torments dire.

Afflict the imprisoned Templars ; then, at length,
(So limbs and body might, shorn of their head,
Wither and languish,) seized on Jacques himself,

51

^b Philip the Fair.

And burnt him at the stake in Paris' town.
Who, dying mid the flames, with voice upraised
High o'er the shout of men and crack of fire,
Cited the cruel king and treacherous pope
To appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ
Before one year. Nor did avenging Heaven
Heed not; for, stricken by the hand of fate,
Fell prince and pontiff, as he prophesied¹. 59

Rode next, of Norman and of Frankish blood,
A noble throng;—brave Godfrey, chosen first
To rule the hard-won realm of Palestine;
Tancred, the Christian Hector; Bohemund;
Baldwin of Flanders; Hugh of Vermandois;
And he, who, leader of the seventh crusade,
Fighting before the walls of Tunis fell,
Louis, last hero of the Holy Wars.

Three days they journeyed through the
classic fields,
Which skirt the dark and pine-clad Apennines.
But when the fourth morn with its rainbow
belt 70
Of orange, violet, and emerald
Flashed in the East; amid her hills embowered,
Like flower in the woods, or pearl beset with
gold,
Shone the fair city of the Florentines.
First of the citizens to greet his Lord

Came one of sad and austere countenance ;
High-browed, thin-lipped, with keen and search-
ing eye ;

Wearing on head the laurel diadem.

Him all the mighty ones of ancient days
With low obeisance greeted ; since to him, 80
Passing in vision through the courts of heaven,
Hell's murky pit, and that uncertain sphere,
Where, purged of lesser stain, the spirits mount
By due gradation tow'rds the realm of bliss,—
Much of their souls' deep joy or misery
Was once made clear. Now therefore, clothed
in flesh,

As whilome marrowless and fitful shades,
They hailed the adventurous bard, whose mind
had dared

To bridge the desolating stream of death,
Rend the thick veil, and bare to mortal view 90
The triple mystery of Eternal life.

But he,—whose ears the hymns of Paradise,
Whose eyes had known the glories of the
elect,

And that full Splendour of the reigning THREE,—
On Christ alone turned his bewildered sight.
For when, slow mounting through the stairs of
heaven,

From star to star, from home of blissful saint

To mansion yet more blest, he reached at length

The cloudless empyréan; and beheld
God, like a dazzling Rainbow of pure Light, 100
Threefold, whereof the interior Circle bare
True semblance of a Human Face; thereat
Strove he to solve the Secret of our Faith,
And learn how Man was God, how God was
Man.

Howbeit the strong wings of his passionate
thought

Fainted and flagged; alone the high desire
Burnt in his heart, unquenched, unsatisfied².
Now, having gained the height which then he
sought,

To know his God Incarnate; he stood still,
With fixed eyes lost in wonderment, and gazed,
As on the unclouded sun the bird of Jove, 111
Full on the Face and Features of his Lord:
Then cried, ‘O Image of the Eternal God,
In Thy serene Divinity yet man,
And in Thy Perfect Manhood most divine!
I deemed that Thou, translated to Thine heaven,
No guise of mortal flesh wouldest longer wear,
But in the quintessential Light of Light
Fused and transfigurèd, wouldest ever thus,
Thyself unmoved, pervade with light and life

The countless orbs of never-ending space. 121
Idly I dreamed ; for was not light the first,
And man the last and best of all Thy works ?
How then shouldst Thou, reflecting in Thyself
All virtue and perfection, pass once more
Into mere mist and shapeless radiancy ?
Likewise that Flower of circles luminous³,
In fashion like to a rose, which wheeled and
sang

Around Thy Throne,—how should Thy living
Church

Lose in such empty semblance the high soul
And all its thousand energies, wherewith 131
Thou didst inform this breathing frame of man ?
O how much braver than my fancy deemed
The Church Thou rulest, and Thyself its Head !
Our mortal strivings then were not in vain,
Not vain the painter's rapture, the bard's fire,—
The glory of mitred priest, minster and dome ;
But all shall be continued, and each soul
Wear the best brightness of his human powers
Purged and made glorious in the Smile of God.'

Having thus spoke, within the well-known
walls 141

The poet led his Master. From all sides
Into the central square much people thronged,
Gathered at summons of their ancient bell.

As, when some mighty minstrel wakes the strain
Of deeds heroic or of battles won,
Dull hearts are quickened to new life, and seem
To brandish sword, shake spear and chase the
foe,

Clothed with the shadow of their fathers' fame ;
So, to their bell's deep clangour hearkening, 150
The men of Florence, as released from spell,
Shook off the long-engrained ignominy,
Which had consumed their latter years, and
lived

Once more the great life of their glorious prime.
For Christ was in their midst, tranquil and
strong,

Christ, the forlorn hope of this weary world,
Christ, the contagious fire of Whose clear Mind
Woke in each heart the slumbering deity.
And all bright hopes and splendid memories,
All brave ambitions and heart-stirring thoughts
Of the olden time took birth, and bloomed
afresh

161

Through His benign and gracious influence.
Around Him too, as globes of seeded pearl
Girding some bright imperial diamond,
Stood the delight and honour of their land,
Builder and priest and painter, by whose fame
Florence was once true flower of Italy.

Here was the framer of that stately dome^c,
 Of all since built the noblest, whose dark cope
 And towering lantern loom o'er Arno's vale,
 Like to some purple cloud, which doth o'erhang
 The rose and emerald of the sunset sky. 172
 There was brave Giotto, born before his time,
 Once more regarding with new-wakened eyes
 The darling of his fancy^d; while the priest,
 Doomed on this spot to fires of martyrdom,
 Whose sad face and illuminated smile
 Live on the painter's canvas,—stood hard by.^e

Now, by His mailèd knights encompassèd,
 Into the quaint and venerable square, 180
 Mid flashing spear and pennant, rode the Lord.
 A silver mantle round His neck was clasped,
 A silver crown was on His royal Head.
 Not since the golden days, when Christendom,
 Knit by the fetters of one common Faith,
 Bowed to one pontiff and one emperor,
 Had the good town of Florence thus beheld
 Her Cæsar. Therefore doubt in many a breast
 And murmurs rose: 'for what if this our Lord,
 Reigning, should quench with new authority
 The rights and late-born freedom of our town?'

^c Brunelleschi.

^d The Campanile of the Cathedral.

^e Savonarola.

But when the illustrious poet, whose great
name

192

Shines in the Tuscan heaven preëminent,
Was seen and known; straight every mouth
grew dumb,

While to his speech they listed.

Dante then,

King of Italian bards, with laurel crowned,
Mounted the stairs, and thus bespake the
throng:

‘Land of my heart, illustrious Italy!
And thou, fair Florence, queen of art and song,
Who, like the sun, diffusing heat and light, 200
Didst in old time from zenith of thy fame
O’er the benighted world shed radiance!
List to my words; old truth I speak yet new,
Old words once true, through Christ now true
again.

I say then now as erst; while Rome was
strong,

And the stern sceptre of your Teuton chiefs^{*}
Cast its protecting influence o’er your land,
So long, like tender plants, which sheltered
grow

Beneath the shade of some imperious oak,
Ye little states, which stood not of yourselves,
Blossomed secure: (for this our Italy

211

Breeds not of warriors nor of statesmen bold
 The seed heroic ; happy if her priests
 Yet rule the Church, and her victorious art
 Bring Europe to her feet.) But when the strife,
 Prolonged from age to age, betwixt the twain,
 Whose peaceful rule had knit the world in one,
 Ceased not ; until the wearied emperor,
 Shaking Italian dust from off his feet,
 Hied to his northern citadel,—since then, 220
 Fall'n from your high place, ye became as
 nought.

But now a mightier Cæsar than e'er held
 The keys of Peter's shrine, a stronger far
 Than German Albert, whom I hailed of yore
 To heal the woes of your distracted state^f,
 A Prince more potent than great Charles him-
 self,
 Clothed in His Father's glory, comes to rule
 Rome, Florence, and the world ; Who with great
 power
 Shall reign unmatched, imperious, evermore.
 Ye therefore, Florentines, with joy salute 230
 Your heaven-born Emperor.'

Whereat the crowd
 Shouted, 'Laus omnis, salus, gloria-
 Imperatori nostro Cæsari'

^f *Purgatorio*, vi. 97.

Piissimo Augusto ;' then made haste,
And haled the treasured store of hall and shrine
For Him to bless,—pictures of priceless art,
Statues, and well-wrought cups, and figured
gems.

'For now,' said they, 'the fame which heretofore
Decked our fair city, shall by grace of God
Be thrice repaid ; and Florence, queen of art,
As Rome, high seat of Apostolic power, 241
Twin lights of Italy, from every land
Shall draw their pilgrims and their worshippers
When evening fell, a pageant they prepared
Of guildsmen and artificers, who marched
With flags and the antique symbols of their
craft

Before the palace-steps. Anon there passed
Of boys and youths a joyful company,
Who sang the praise of famous Florentines ;
Lauding in their degree now Dante's pen, 250
Now Michael's pencil ; last extolling God,
Prime Architect, prime Artist, 'Whose sole
Hand

Both framed the skies and built the eternal
hills ;

Split the sun's beam to chord of many hues,
And spread the same, in vesture manifold,
O'er crimson flower, green earth, and azure sky.'

But on the morrow, gathering all His knights
Within the city square, the Lord of Hosts
Pursued His northward journey. Many a day
Through the rich meads and yellow harvest
fields

260

Of Lombardy He marched, until at length
The glistening spire and slender pinnacles
Of Milan's peerless minster, seen afar,
Showed like an ark of crystal, cut in the sky.
Here a gigantic horseman, steel y-clad,
Wearing a mural circlet of pure gold
About the thick locks of his flaxen hair,
Stood in mid-road to greet them ; whose deep
voice

Uttered right joyous salutation.

'Art Thou then He, Who shall with might
restore

270

The realm of Christ and Rome, which these
poor hands

Founded ? All hail, Divine Deliverer !

Charles, named the Great, of Spain, France,
Italy

And Germany once Lord, whom all the West
Owned as her sovereign prince and arbiter,
Salutes Thee King and Kaiser. To Thy
Mind

A thousand years are but as yesterday :

For me the revolutions of the years 278
Breed rather doubt and sorrow than delight.
For since that day, one thousand years agone,
When the third Leo with his tribes of Rome
Hailed me Augustus, how are all things changed !
Where reigned one monarch, now an obscure
 throng
Of puny realms, diverse in tongue and race,
Crowd each on other: where one parent
 Church
Mastered the obedient world, now swarming
 sects
Insult the majesty of Peter's chair,
Doling salvation to their votaries.
For the knight's war-cry, for the chant of
 priest
Is heard the jangling din of iron wheels. 290
Bring back the days of old, Great Judge of
 men !
Call Thine elect, display Thy Sign in heaven,
And vindicate Thine outraged Deity.'

Then he, whose faithful harp brought solace
 once^g

Unto the captive Richard, caught the word
Of lamentation, and responsive thus
Poured forth the sorrows of his heart in song.

' Let me not, Master, when Thy Name I hear
By careless tongues rejected or maligned,
Rapt in the stream of faithless souls unkind,
 Forswear Thy holy Fear.

'Nay rather, far from earth's tempestuous
tide,
In some fair cloister's sober solitude
Shield me from noise of men and tumult rude,
Close stationed at Thy side.'

So prayed he singing ; but the knights forth-
with 310
nelt on the plain bareheaded ; as of yore,
When, after many a hardly-foughten field,
They gained the sacred walls, and awful touched
The spot made holy by their Master's Feet.
But He, 'Mourn not, My children, for the
world,
So rash and faithless seeming, lies e'en yet
Bound to yourselves by laws inscrutable,

Bound to My Church and to the Throne of God.
Not all forgotten are ye, nor your works
Unknown: lo, many a minster and fair shrine,
Reared in the days of faith and chivalry, 321
Stand now, sure witness of your zeal and love.
See yonder marble fabric, gleaming bright
Beneath the glad rays of this autumn sun;
There, in the broken twilight and rich gloom
Of its mysterious aisles, o'ercanopied
With sweep of lofty arches, and the maze
Of stately columns, ye may seem in truth,
As in some rock-strown wilderness, withdrawn
Into God's solitude and heaven's repose.'

Then they made haste, and did with speed
attain 331

That mighty monument, built in praise of
Christ,—

Of Christ, the Virgin-Mother, and His Saints,—
Where on the hundred spires, as sentinels
Waiting the Bridegroom's coming, stand the
forms,

In marble wrought, of many a famous man,
King, saint, or valiant champion of the Church.
Them at the gates a reverend prelate met,
Ambrose, who bare the crown of Lombardy,—
A leafy circle of pure gold, with band 340
Of iron yet more precious, since the Nail

Which had transfix'd the Lord was wrought
therein.

This then good Ambrose, kneeling on both
knees,

Proffered his Master, and spake words there-
to :

' See, Lord, the sacred coronet, wherewith
In ancient times our Kaisers were adorned.
Thrice were they crowned, with wreath of silver
first

In their own native land, with iron here,
At Rome with circlet of imperial gold.

But since the fifth Charles, Lord of Austria, 350
Flanders and Lombardy and Spain to boot,
Living, his realm unwieldy cleft in twain ;
This rim hath pressed no rightful Kaiser's
head ⁵.'

Full courteously the Master from his hands
The treasured sign of more than royal power
Took, and embraced withal the saintly man.

Then prayers were sung, and the great archèd
roof

Echoed with tuneful praise and orison.

No tongue was silent, but each knightly voice
Lifted the 'Pange lingua ;' while the priest,
Beneath the velvet, purple canopy, 361
Exalted and adored the Blessed Host.

Now through the plain with rapid march they
press

Onward to Venice, bride of the silver sea ;
Passing thy waves, still Garda, bosomed fair,
Like a bright sapphire, mid thy purple hills.
[Ye, who have journeyed o'er the rock-bound
Alps

Unto the sunny land of Italy,
Know how the sweet lakes nestle at the feet
Of their gigantic, cloud-capt guardians : 370
Have watched perchance at sunset, how all
hues

Of sun and sky and earth and moon are blent
Around them into subtlest harmony :
Above—the bright disc of the rising moon ;
Below—the still deep waters ; while between—
The mountains, azure-skirted, vermeil-crowned,
Float in a mist of lilac, pearl, and rose.]
But, when the third day neared to evensong,
Behold, against the flushed and fading sky
The towers and domes of a fair city stood, 380
Enthroned amid the waters. Then the knights
Knew not, encumbered with their mailed steeds,
How they should pierce the watery screen, and
reach

The enchanted city mid her walls of sea.
But every doubt soon vanished ; such a cloud

Of barges, gondolas and wherries thronged
The unpaven roadway. These then, with their
freight

Of armed crusaders, to the city's core,
Bearing a lantern each at stern and prow,
Betwixt high palaces and ancient towers 390
Threaded their way, like glowworms in the
dusk.

There stands a wondrous palace, all men
know,
Fronting the deep sea and the lesser square ;
Built on a rich arcade, whose marble shafts
Are crowned with broidered work of leaf and
flower.

High in the midst on either side projects
A canopied and carven niche, whereon
Of yore the sovereign doges spake their will
Unto the listening people, ranged below.
Into this marble pulpit climbed the Lord,
And from its lofty parapet received 401
The clamorous welcome of Venetian tongues.
And thus they sang : ' The darling of the
sun,

Venice, and mistress of the headstrong sea,
Salutes the Lord alike of sea and sun.
Wise in all else, John surely erred herein,
Saying in heaven the sea should no more be.

For look, what glory of mountain, stream or
vale

Can match his puissant laughter; whether
morn,

Loosed from her chamber in the glimmering
East, 410

Dash into glint of gold his ridges dim,
And into dust of diamonds turn his spray;
Or eve ensanguine his unmeasured fields
With dyes of rose and scarlet; or the moon
With lightning of her silver smite his blue?

At all times best, most beautiful is he,
The best is he, and Venice is his peer.
Around, before, throughout her, like blue veins
His currents flow: therefore who loves the sea,
Loves Venice; we Venetians, partial still, 420
Love the sea much, but Venice most of all.'

O Guardian-Angel, born of mist and sun,
Who from thy golden sphere in highest heaven
Watchest the fortunes of the fair sea-queen!
(Surely thy robe is azure crossed with white,
Thy crown of sapphire, and of pearl thy zone;)
Add of thy tender grace some whit, I pray,
To the rough measures of mine English song,
So I not wholly mar thy child's renown.
For on the broad breast of our parent earth 430
Lives not a gem more lustrous, more serene

Than Venice, pearl and pride of Italy⁶ ;
Joy of the world, the painter's Paradise,
The poet's Eden, and the dreamer's heaven.
Thou therefore, lover of bright things and
good,
Place thee, what time the red sun dips his
head,
Or when the moon rides, and the stars shine
clear,
Beneath her bell-tower's venerable shade.
Mark well the curious minster, how each vane
Cuts like a comet into the opaque blue; 440
How round and slumbrous brood the domes;
 how deep
Glimmer the five great arches; with what charm
Looms the rich crimson of yon towering staves!
'Twould almost seem no sleight of mortal hand
Had e'er constructed aught so strangely fair:
But that the fabled elves, who haunt the caves
Down in the green-blue bottom of the sea,
Had built from gem and shell and crimson
weed,
With charmèd hand and incantation rare,
This variegated citadel, to grace 450
The dim dominions of their ocean king.
 Now when the day was dead, and sober eve
Lent to each tower and dome her silver shade,

Marshalled by famous Dandolo, the Lord
Entered the hall of banquet, and took meat
Seated betwixt the doge and Charlemain.
To right the bold crusading knights had place
With princes and exárchs of Eastern Rome ;
To left sate many a famed Venetian.
Here was brave Richard of the Lion Heart, 460
Imperial Baldwin, and the royal Saint ;
There sate Bellini with great Titian,
Paul of Verona, and gloomy Tintoret.
But when of meat and herbs and sparkling
wine
All had partaken to their hearts' desire,
Uprose the fair-haired Blondel, and discoursed
In song melodious, to his faithful lyre,
Of earth new-born, home of the saints and
God.

‘They told me of a heaven, far in the sky,
Where they, who love the truth and work the
right, 470
Should reign for ever, crowned and robed with
light.

Their speech I trusted not nor did deny,
Knowing for him who lived in love, as I,
Heaven was already, and heaven's glory God.

'They told me of a dark way, men had trod ;
 Which past,—a new world, free from sin's alloy,
 Opened its treasures of unfading joy.

Through the dark shadow have I fared, yet
 prove

On the other side no streets of shining gold,
 But smiling earth and ocean, as of old, 480
 Lit by the Presence of the Lord of Love.'

But when the sable-yokèd car of night
 Rode high in heaven, and all the stars shone
 out,

Clear mirrored on the purple belt of sea ;
 The merry citizens prepared a fight
 On the smooth surface of their land-locked
 mere.

Here ships of Venice, bearing in their stern
 The wingèd emblem of St. Mark, lay ranged
 Along the shoreward side ; to whom opposed,
 Flaunted their silken standards, brave with
 gold, 490

The imperial galleys of Byzantium.
 Long veered the doubtful combat, till at length,
 Armed with his magic fire, the subtler Greek
 Bore down the craft of his more agile foe.
 Then he, whose skill prevailed, Alexius,
 Cæsar and Eastern King, before whose throne

The first crusading host once bent the knee,—
Laid at the Master's feet his wreath of bay,
Saying, ‘Our crown of Eastern sovereignty 499
Thou deignedst not t'accept ; but this at least,
Great Kaiser, here in Venice, where are stored
Some scant memorials of our ancient fame,—
This wreath of laurel be not loth to bind
About Thy Brow, lest all our centuries
Of empire seem forgotten and in vain.’
Therefore the Lord for leaves of bay awhile
Exchanged the gold and iron of His crown.

Full many a day the weary knights took
rest

In the sweet city, wedded to the sea.
To Mark's fair shrine, risen with the sun be-
times, 510
They plied the frequent step ; and kneeling
there
Mid wealth of costly stones and pictured forms
Of gilt and tinted crystal, prayed the prayers,
And sang the selfsame Latin hymns, which
fell

From their own lips eight hundred years agone.
And now departing summer shed his rays
Paler on sky and stream, while equal night
Challenged the lordship of bright-robed day.
Hence, ere the passes of the hills endued 520

Their wintry panoplies of ice and snow,
The Lord set forth with His attendant host
To cross the frozen region. Marching, then,
Westward, He tarried by those inland seas,
Which do bewilder and confound the mind
With their exceeding and rare loveliness.
But when His knights had tasted to the full
Thy splendour, blue Maggiore, and thy grace
Enchanting, sinuous Como; towards the heights
Bending their upward steps, they stood at
length

530

Beneath the great White Mountain, Europe's
king.
Here a fair youth of ruddy countenance,
Clothed as a mountaineer of wild Tyrol,
Hailed them, and craved to guide their erring
feet
Along the steep and perilous mountain path;
Saying, 'The dear Lord knows His servant
Max,
Who loved in life to climb the craggy height,
Traverse the deep ravine, and tread the fields
Of pathless snow. For once upon a day
It chanced, that, tracking the light-footed
goat

540

From rock to rock, I lighted on a ledge'
Whence there was no return : for at my feet

The headlong cliff, sheer and impassable,
Veered downward towards the plain, nor all my
skill

Availed to reach the slippery crags o'erhead.
From noon till night high on my jutting post
Placed, like a sentinel 'twixt earth and heaven,
I watched in hope; if haply some brave boy
Might scale the cliff above me, and with steps
Hewn in the living rock, or guiding rope 550
Unloose me from my solitary thrall.

But none had power to save: and now I
heard,

Borne from the dark depths of the dread abyss,
The voices of my faithful Tyrolese,
Who cried to Heaven for my deliverance.

At length, with hunger, thirst and weariness
Oppressed, my head against the rocky wall
I had awhile inclined, when suddenly
A torch flashed o'er me, and a boyish form
Angelic stood before my wondering eyes. 560
Whose guiding lantern and upholding arm
Led me through crag and fell, by path un-
known,

Safe to the bosom of the well-known plain.
Now therefore, Lord, by heavenly aid once
saved,

I fain would render service to heaven's King.

So saying, heled them onward through the vale
Crowned by the rocky spires and snowy dome
Of the Alpine monarch ; whence by gentle slopes
Mounting, they gained the hospitable walls
Built on the lonely height of Bernard's pass.
But, when the morrow's sun kindled the sky, 571
They sought the little hamlet, which lies hid
Beneath the pine-clad shoulders and torn crest,
Gigantic, of Helvetia's noblest hill ^h.
No monument by mortal hand upreared—
Castle, or dome, or pyramid—can compare
With its august and stern magnificence.
Surely, when God first framed the starry
heavens,
And from the deep sea drew the solid earth,
Upheaving from her dense and fiery core 580
The molten masses, and with cunning Hand
Shaping the various grace of mount and vale ;
This was the master-work, on which He poured
The full abundance of His plastic skill.
[Which angel helped the Eternal Architect
To mould this huge Leviathan of the hills?
Who clothed his brow with thunder ? Who en-
dued
His sides with dark-green robe of spreading
pine ?

^h The Matterhorn.

Was it the lord of death, sad Azrael ?
Or was it rather he, who smote the fiend, 590
The warrior-prince, bold-hearted Michael?]]
For not, like meaner mountains, by slow steps
From ridge to ridge, but sheer and with one
bound

Rising, he spurns the plain and cleaves the sky.
Yet, wouldest thou see him in his bravest dress,
Go before sunrise, when the silver snow
Gleams bright and cold beneath the moon and
stars ;

Then watch him, as by magic interchange
First his imperial purple he endues,
Then flashes into royal red, and last 600
Glows golden, to salute his lord the sun.

Here tarried they three days, then onward
marched
To the fair valley girt on either side ⁱ
With rocks, whereout a thousand streamlets run,
Bursting and bubbling down the cliff in spray.
Thence, ere the morrow's sun had touched the
vale,

They sought that famèd pass, whereon who
stands
Sees shrouded in her snow-white panoply
The mighty Virgin mountain, and hard by 609

ⁱ Lauterbrunnen.

The Monk's bald crown and little Silberhorn.
 So marching, on the seventh day they attained
 Thy lake, Lucerne, of the bright azure heaven
 Fair sister, brighter still ; which riverlike
 Winds its pellucid stream through four cantons,
 And mirrors all the mountains on its breast.
 Thee and thy beauty had but John beheld,
 Sure with no sea of crystal had he decked
 His visionary heaven, but thither straight
 Had borne the waters blue of sweet Lucerne.
 Here they encamped, while peasants from their
 hills

620

Flocked to the charmèd shore, now doubly blest
 With God's own gift of beauty, and its God.
 Amongst them strode, leading his infant son,
 The sturdy marksman, whose unerring shaft
 Pierced the far apple on his darling's head ;—
 No more a rebel, but with loyal heart
 Hailing his Kaiser. Whom the Lord of life
 With all his stalwart Alpine mountaineers
 Greeted, and thus with gracious speech resumed
 The homage of their long-estrangèd hearts. 630
 'O fortunate, if your own bliss ye knew,
 Whose dwelling is among the eternal hills !
 To you the Majesty of highest God

'O fortunati nimium, sua si bona nōrint, Agricolæ.'— Virg.
 Georg.

Is daily manifest ; for you the clouds,
Whereby the brightness of His Face is hid,
Roll backward, and reveal the glorious world
In its primeval splendour, as when once
Sang in glad unison the stars of morn,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy.
What need ye lofty fanes or laboured lore, 640
To whom each day the heavenly Architect
Displays the wondrous works of His own
Hand ;—

Before whose eyes lies open the great Book,
Writ with the Very Thoughts of God ? O lakes,
Mountains, and valleys, and deep forest shades,
And thou, unquenchèd glory of sun and sky !
In ye the soul, though dead to all beside,
Reaps benediction and assured repose.'

He spake ; and they rejoiced exceeding
much, 649

Hearing the praise of their dear native land :
Thus then to other one his speech addressed :
' Dwellers in cities were our lords of old,
Loving the pomp of courts, who rarely deigned
To visit poor and rugged Switzerland.
But This, like hunter Max of ancient tale,
Loves our bleak country ; This in very truth
Our Kaiser is and evermore shall be.'
So spake they well-content, and round the hills

Woke every slumbering echo with a blast 659
Loud and repeated from their long Alp-horns ;
Anon, as night fell darkling, and the heavens
Vied with the deeper sapphire of the lake,
Lit fiery beacons on the hill-tops near
In token of their rendered fealty.

Five days beside the still shores of the lake
The Lord with all His warriors pitched His
tent.

And now with joust and jocund tournament
They whiled the day ; now, borne on slender
skiff

Over the smiling waters, rowed or sailed
From cove to cove, and still found fresh de-
light 670

Rounding each headland of the winding mere.
But when the sixth morn tinged the distant
heights

With flames and saffron, quickly the brave
host

Took horse, and Eastward journeyed tow'rds
the stream,

Which through the plains of Europe rolls his
course

Ample and swift to the far Euxine sea.

No walls of town detained Him, nor enticed

To stay His march ; not thou, fair Munich, rich

With stores of new and ancient art ; nor thou,
Yet fairer Salzburg, mid thy frosty hills 680
Seated as queen, beneath whose azure skies
First breathed the prince of heaven-born har-
mony^k.

But having gained the River, and that town,
Which marks the borders of the Suabian realm¹,
They spied a fleet of vessels, painted gay
With crimson black and orange, on whose
decks

Stood soldiers, clothed, as in the good old days,
With spotless tunics of imperial white. 688

Two chiefs amid the throng stood eminent :—
First Otho, puissant emperor, who from Franks
Won, and bequeathed to his own German race
The Roman crown and sceptre ; next to him,
The sire of Europe's noblest family,
Rudolph of Hapsburg, whom two princely lines
Of Austrian Kaisers and Iberian Kings
Own as their head. These now with lifted
voice

Into the imperial realm and heritage
Welcomed the heavenly Prince ; and one made
speech :

‘ Well know the pilots of our slender fleet
Each shoal and current of old Danaw’s stream.

^k Mozart.

¹ Passau.

Thou therefore, Lord, though day's light even
now

701

Fade in the West, with fearless mind embark :
For, ere the morrow's sun attain his goal,
There shall arise before Thee, if God will,
The crownèd summit of Saint Stephen's spire
And the fair City of the kaiser-kings.'

So, guided by the faint light of the stars
And the pale empress of the heavens, all night
By many an ancient convent, through thick
woods

And lofty fir-clad hills, adown the tide 710
Journeyed the bold crusaders with their Lord.
Swiftly, like scudding sea-fowl on the wing,
Sped the light keels, or rather seemed to fly
Over the blue-green waters : but when morn
Threw her first beam athwart the topmost
sail,

Behold, the vine-clothed hill appeared in sight,
Over against the City, where the stream
Parts his broad volume into channels twain.
Then did the roar of cannon, mixed with blare
Of brazen trumpet and shrill-voicèd flute, 720
Startle the stillness of the morning air :
While ever, in sonorous undertone,
Louder and louder grew, near and more near,
The shout and tramp of a great multitude,

Marching in triumph : as the stedfast note
Of diapason, when the hautboys shrill
Make noiseful interlude, rolls on unchecked
In long deep billows of majestic sound.
In truth it seemed as if all Germany,
Now from a long trance waking, saw at length
The vast ideal and divine romance 731
Of her dear, glorious, Holy Roman realm
By God's own Hand made real and alive.
And all the hidden fire and loyalty,
And all the smouldering poëtry of the race
(As, when the West wind blows the frost
away,
The little songsters of the woods take heart,
And fill the glad air with their minstrelsy,)
Broke sudden into flame ; and every tongue
Found voice, and hailed with acclamation 740
The Eternal Kaiser to His German throne.

NOTES TO BOOK IX.

- 1 l. 59. I received much help, in writing the above passage, from the interesting paper on the Templars, contributed by Mr. J. A. Froude to 'Good Words.'
- 2 l. 107. See last lines of the *Divina Commedia*.
'All' alta phantasia qui mancò possa :
Ma già volgeva il mio disiro e il velle,
L'Amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.'
- 3 l. 127. See *Paradiso*, Cant. xxxi. 1.
'In forma dunque di candida rosa
Mi sì mostrava la milizia santa,
Che nel suo sangue Christo fece sposa.'
- 4 l. 206. See *Purgatorio*, vi. 91 et seq.
'Ahi gente, che dovesti esser devota,
E lasciar seder Cesar nella sella,
Se bene intendi ciò che Dio ti nota !'
- 5 l. 353. It was, however, assumed by the great Napoleon, 'Emperor of the French.'
- 6 l. 432. The expression, 'pearl of Italy,' as applied to Venice, I owe to M. Henri Taine. See 'Voyage en Italie ;' Chapter on Venice.
- 7 l. 541. This beautiful legend has been enshrined in more than one German ballad. The prettiest is by Collin, and is entitled, 'Kaiser Max auf der Martinswand in Tyrol, 1493.' According to this ballad, the Kaiser made known his identity to the Tyrolese in the valley, by tying his Golden Fleece to a stone, and letting it fall down the precipice.

TRANSLATION.

- I. 232. ‘All praise, salvation and glory be to our Emperor and Cæsar, the most pious Augustus,’—the words used by the Romans at the coronation of Charlemagne.

BOOK X.

Europe, 333.—The Empire, 33.

ARGUMENT.

At Vienna the Lord is crowned in St. Stephen's cathedral with the golden crown of Charlemagne, and meets the seven great musicians in the hall of music. He reviews the troops which fought against Napoleon at Leipsic, and holds a council of European princes.

 HEE I salute, imperial Germany,
 Of Kaiser, sage, and minstrel chosen
 home:

And mid thine ancient cities, thee not least,
 Vienna, shield and strength of Christendom
 Against the invading onset of the Turk¹!

In truth three cities in three lands I know,
 Oxford, Vienna, Venice, which are dowered,
 Whether by some peculiar smile of Heaven,
 Or by the consecrating hand of Time,
 Beyond all others with a native grace

Mysterious, and an inexpressive charm.
Less fair than Venice, and to me who sing
Than Oxford, mother of my soul, less dear,
Yet thee, Vienna, thy renowned line
Of Apostolic kings², the loyalty
Genial and courteous of thy citizens³,
Thy matchless minster, and perchance yet more
The masters of immortal melody
Who dwelt within thy walls, raise and exalt
High mid the illustrious cities of our earth. 20
Wherefore amid the fairest fair art thou,
And mid the noblest noble ; nor has Heaven,
Whose golden eye surveys all works of man,
Aught in its ken more loveable than thee.

O'er many a page of mortal history
Deep musing, (for the Lord of Life and Love,
Though rapt from human sight, yet watched
and knew

From His supernal Throne at the Father's
side

All the vicissitudes of earthly fate,) 30
Down the swift channel passed the heavenly
King

Into the City's midst. Before the quay,
True father of his country, Joseph stood^a,

^a Joseph II., who gave the 'Prater' to the Viennese.

The well-belovèd Kaiser,—at his side
 The second Frederic, and unhappy Franz^b,
 Who, vexed by cruel Fortune and the sword
 Of the resistless Gallic conqueror,
 Lost the proud title^c, nigh six hundred years
 Worn by the princes of old Rudolph's line.
 He, when his eyes discerned the warlike form
 Of his great Founder, valiant Charlemain, 40
 Cried out with tears, ‘O light of Christendom,
 Boldest and best of thine imperial race !
 Pardon the weakness of thine ill-starred son.
 And Thou, divine Restorer, King supreme !
 Say for what deep offence avenging Heaven
 Impelled the Gaulish pest with sword and fire
 To shower destruction on our peaceful realm ?’
 To whom with gracious smile the Lord of
 Lords,
 ‘Not on the sinful head alone, my son^d,
 Doth fell disaster come : this world were else 50
 Already Paradise, nor fitting school
 For souls unpurgèd of their earthly dross.
 Rather through much affliction do the just
 Mount to the stars, and scale the stairs of
 heaven.’

Now the deep sound of Stephen's matin bell,

^b Francis II. ^c The title ‘Emperor of Germany.’

^d Luke xiii. 2, 3, 4.

Heard mid the hum of voices, bade all hearts
Offer to God the firstfruits of their praise.
Therefore the long procession of armed knights,
White Austrian soldiery, and robèd kings,
Followed by throng of loyal citizens, 60
Marched through the city to the minster's
gates.
And now they stood beneath that peerless
spire,
Which is the gem of Christian Germany.
Fairest of God's works is the silent peak,
Which from the vale of Zermatt rears its head
Snow-flecked, stupendous, to the clouds of
heaven.
Fairest of works wrought by the hand of man
Is the great spire, whose slender pyramid,
Like some aërial poplar turned to stone,
Reigns glorious from Vienna's crowning hill, 70
And points the heart of Germany to God.
Bareheaded stood the knights and upward
gazed,
Gazed upward with glad heart, and thanked
the Lord.
Meanwhile to meet them came young choristers,
Who, clad in alb with border of white lace
And crimson cassock, like fair flowers, in front
Clustered; while after them, in reverend line,

Filed prelate, priest and red-robed cardinal.
These, as they walked, sang joyous, 'Lift your
heads,
Gates of the Lord's own temple, and receive 80
Into your tabernacle's mystic night
The Lord of Hosts.' As, mid the deeper
sounds
Of falling water and of rustling breeze,
Is heard sometimes, far in the forest glade,
The clear, shrill carol of the wakeful birds ;
So mid the clash and tramp of iron heels
Sounded the sweet chaunt of those choristers.
Soon to the notes of their melodious song
Through the great western porch knight, priest
and king
Entered. The shrine was wrapt in solemn
gloom, 90
Pierced by the single, solitary lamp,
Which, like a sparkling ruby, shone serene
Before the central altar,—earnest dear
Of God's own Presence in His earthly home ;
Who, while our little tapers shed their rays
A moment, and then die, shines on undimmed,
The LAMP and SPLENDOUR of Eternity.
When prayers were ended, and the last
Amen
Wafted with incense to the doors of heaven,

Straightway the Lord, wearing His broidered robe 100

And iron crown of Lombardy, stood forth
Before the concourse of assembled knights.

To Whom on bended knee great Charlemain,
Otho, Rudolph and the good Kaiser Max
Proffered the symbols of imperial power.

The Crown, with uncut gems and Roman cross,
By Charles himself ; the Cloak of woven gold,
With stole and well-wrought gloves and girdled
alb,

By Otho ; and the Book by Max was given.

[All these were buried in the tomb at Aix 110
With the first Holy Roman Emperor⁴.

For when the stone was moved, where Karl was
laid,

And the sepulchral chamber bared to view,
There sate the mighty emperor, robed and
crowned

As if alive, and bearing on his knees
The blessed Word of our Salvation.]

These then the Master being decked withal,
From Rudolph's hand received the sacred
rod⁵.

Whereat the prelate-princes on His Head
Laid consecrating hands ; so not alone 120

⁴ The sprinkling-rod.

As Monarch, but as Priest with Right divine,
He should maintain His endless government,
Lord Paramount, and Sovran King of Kings.
Then was the sound of silver trumpets heard,
Such as the Roman Church employs to grace
Her noblest rite, the solemn Eucharist,
When, heralding the Presence of her Lord
Upon His Altar, ‘Glory be to God’
Thrills through the vaulting arches, and sub-
dues

The adoring soul in ecstasy of praise. 130

Then from the lamp, which burned before the
shrine,

One lit his taper, which from hand to hand
Passed, till each priest and every belted knight
Bore the glad sign of Him, Who is the world’s
Illumination, and the house of God

Twinkled with many a star of waxen flame.

O then, and not till then, from every heart
Fled, as a dream, the woes of bygone years,—
The misnamed rapine of the Prussian thief,
The domination of the imperious Gaul, 140
And all the bitter memories of war

Waged against German brethren,—when the
Lord

Sceptred and crownèd through that minster
fair

Went forth in strength and splendour, girt
about

With all the princely worth and martial might
Of the great days of Christian chivalry.

But when the sun had set, and every street
Sparkled with lamplight, as with second day,
Unto a feast of music, as was meet
In music's own metropolis, the King 150
Was forthwith bidden. To the Muses' hall
Fared then betimes the heavenly Guest ; and
there

With Franz and bearded Frederic at His side
And many a music-loving Austrian prince,
Sate through the night, as in some fairy's
bower,

Soothed by the great musicians' witchery.

O Art transcendent, given by Grace of God
Latest, but nowise least, to earthborn man !
How can poor words express thee ? how can
verse,

Mere rhythmic cadence of the self-same feet,
Tell out the full wealth of thy boundless store ?
Thou art the quintessential Art of art, 162
The joy of God, the mother-speech of heaven.
Thou, for five thousand years not rightly
known,

Now, like thy sister arts, round and complete,
Dost close the cycle of our mortal powers,
And match us with the tuneful Seraphim.
When God first taught the human heart to
yearn

After a glory more than earth can give,
First in the poet's harp His Spirit breathed :
And Homer rose with his high tale of gods 171
And godlike men, to shame all future time.
Through sculpture next the soul of man aspired,
What time imperial Athens ruled with might
The Grecian isles ; and beauty was the quest,
Immortal beauty, darkly and in part
Found in the godlike image, stamped on man.
Then shone the unrivalled art of Phidias,
Who framed in bronze or marble forms of grace
Ideal, glorious,—goddesses and gods 180
To people heaven, or earth by God made
heaven.

But when, descending from His seat on high,
True Image of the Father, Christ Himself
Had deigned with men, as brethren, to abide ;
Behoved it then to build meet tabernacle,
Wherein the Lord, returning to His own,
Or in His Flesh and Blood made manifest,
Should dwell enshrined. Therefore through
centuries

This one delightful task absorbed the soul
Of Christian men,—how best to rear a house
Worthy of Christ, which, gathering in one 191
The glory of forest, mountain, leaf and tree,
Should rival in some sort the courts above,
Already one part earth and three parts heaven.
But since the long-expected Prince divine
Came not, but tarried ever, and the Face
He wore sometime and yet again should wear,
With its strange Beauty and expressive Calm,
Grew dim in man's remembrance; a new race 200
Of painters next arose, who saw by faith
God's Countenance, and wrought in living hues
The Vision, which their trancèd spirits beheld.
Last, when these too had run their course,
remained

One thing as yet undone,—to draw from heaven
The angelic harmonies, which round the Throne
Of Highest God repeat in endless flow,
With lyric psalm and choral symphony,
The praise of Him, Who is the One true
Source
Of all sweet sounds, fair sights, and pleasant
things.

Seven ardent souls essayed the mighty
task, 210

All of the German race :—for as the bards

Were of more lands than one ; the sculptors
Greek ;

The master-builders from all Christendom ;
From Italy the painters : so these men,
Who bore heaven's latest message to mankind,
Sprung from the wide realm of the kaiser-
kings.

Mozart the first,—then Handel, potent seer,
Next them the Jupiter of harmony,
Beethóven, then old Bach severe and strong,
Then simpler Haydn and sweet Mendelssohn,
Last Spohr, whose tones of yearning love some-
times

221

Thrill upward to the Throne and Heart of God.
These seven were gathered, when the Lord
appeared,

High on the daís of the furthest hall.
And first they played a four-part melody,
Such as one only of earthborn men e'er
framed,—

So rich and various was the tuneful strain,
So one fair thought, in waves of magic sound,
Ever repeated, never quite the same,
Charmed every sense and lulled the soul to
rest.

230

Then Handel roused them with a fiery burst
Of song triumphant, like some mountain stream,

Which rolls in thunder down the rocky vale ;
‘ Why do the nations rage so furiously ?
Why do the people imagine a vain thing ? ’
Then deep and wild,—like the tempestuous
sea,
Cloud-darkened, but with streaks of sun be-
tween,—
Beethóven urged in passionate refrain
The volume of his vast tumultuous song.
The viol seemed alive, with soul of fire 240
Leaping to heaven ; the gentler clavichord
Now aiding now restraining its bold flight.
But as the last notes of his stormy strain
Sank gradual, and in silence died away,
Old Bach took up the tale ; and wove his web
Of subtle harmonies, whereof the thread,
In mazy modulations infinite
Winding, seemed ever lost and ever found.
Yet, mid a thousand echoes, the main text
Came back at length, renewed its scattered
strength, 250
And took the soul with rapture and content.
The four musicians then approached their
Lord,
Eager for praise. The first was fair and young ;
For ere Time’s finger had engraved his brow,
God took him to Himself, like Raffaelle,

In length of years, as in renown, his peer.
The second was an old man, whose grey head
Seemed overweighed with teeming thought;
the third

Old likewise, rugged and intense to boot,
Like a great oak, half-scorched by heaven's
fire : 260

The last a king of men, who, if not Bach,
Might have been Solomon, with thoughtful
brow

Gentle and calm, like a snow-crowned hill.

'Speak,' said Beethóven first, 'and say which
strain

Delights Thee most;' and Handel, 'My poor
art,

Most gracious Lord, was in Thy service spent.
O joy that I behold the Anointed King
Not as I sung Him!' But old Bach said nought,
Only before his Kaiser bending low,
Pressed with his lips the Sacred Knees and
Feet. 270

Mozart awhile stood silent and aloof:

Therefore the Lord was grieved, and said,
'Hast thou

No word, Mozart, of welcome for Thy Prince?'
Then he, as flower, which opens to the sun,
Ran up, and fell into his Lord's embrace.

So by the side of Him their hearts knew well

Untiring sate the illustrious Four, nor ceased Contemplating His Face. Meanwhile the choir Broke into song, such as the seraphs raised On the first Sabbath, when from all His works God rested, and beheld them very good. 281

‘The heavens are telling out the Glory of God, And the great sky proclaims His handiwork.’

Anon the voice of a sweet chorister Rang through the hall, most like the thrilling note

Of heaven’s peculiar minstrel, who at morn Makes the blue heights reverberate with song ; ‘O had I wings—the wings of the gentle dove— Then would I fly away, and be at rest.’

Whom answering, yet another raised the hymn, Wherein the master-spirit of mighty Spohr 291 Yearns for the living God ; ‘O when, O when Shall I behold the Majesty divine ?’

So till the Daystar touched the vault of night

With grey, and now Orion’s belt waxed pale, Sang they or heard, entrancing and entranced, Borne on the wings of music through the worlds,

Of Space unconscious, and the bounds of Time.

But when the full magnificence of Day
Gleamed on the lofty crest of Stephen's spire,
And lit the roofs of houses, spread beneath 301
Like waves of the sea ; the Lord with speed
arose,

And, led by blue Hussars of Hungary
With dancing plumes of Austrian guards, in
state

Right royal, sought the venerable Burg,
And sat Him in the Hall of Audience.

Him to salute a well-born multitude
Of dukes, electors, princes, margraves, kings
Thronged up the steps, and did obeisance meet.
Ludwig was there, who with fair buildings
decked

310
The well-graced town of Munich ; Frederic
too,

Shrewd architect of Prussian fame ; disrobed
Of orb and goodly crown withal came he :
No skill in arms nor feats of statesmanship
Now could avail to gild his acts of shame,
The stolen lands and violated word.

A band of master-workmen after these
Came with glad heart to greet their living Lord.
These were the faithful men, whose hands devout
Reared through our Christian Europe the great
shrines,

320

Which not the skill of Attic Phidias ;
Nor Egypt, mother of all art ; nor Rome,
Queen of the world, doth equal or surpass.
True saints and heroes they,—who, God-in-spired,

Wrought not for fleeting but for endless time.
Their names are clean forgotten, but their works

Stand, the delight and glory of all lands,
Firm as the rocks which undergird the world.
Through France, Spain, England, Germany,
like stars

Scattered through listless space, they reach to
God

330

From the dull wilderness of earthly life,
Signs of His Power, and Symbols of His
Truth.

Fairest of all, as shines the star of dawn
Amid his golden peers preëminent,
The spire of Stephen rears its fretted height,
From point to base one maze of broidered
stone.

Scarce less, the splendid fane of royal Reims
On the rich sculpture of its varied front
Displays the goodly fellowship of Saints,
Martyrs and Prophets, of old times and new,

340

Whose blood or faith hath sown our Holy Church.

Nor must thou, Milan, not remembered be,
Albeit thy stunted spire and front defaced
Impair some whit thy marble majesty :
Glorious at sunrise, when thy carven peaks,
Like shafts of splintered crystal, glint and gleam

In the fresh morning air ! more glorious still
At moonlight, when each spire and battlement
Is bathed and frosted as with silver rime !
But whoso stands beneath thy lofty roof, 350
He sees thee haply loveliest of all :

For mid the forest of thy sculptured shafts
Mellowed with tints of amber light, all sense
Of sight is drowned in wonder, and the soul
Lost in bewildered rapture and mute praise.

Nor ye remain unsung, romantic Chartres,
Fair Amiens, lovely Rouen, huge Cologne !

Nor thou, of towers the giant, who lookst down
On the dwarf houses round thee, as some oak
Or poplar at the shrubs which gird its feet, 360
Great Strasburg ! placed beside the sparkling
Rhine,

With lacèd collar and with hollow ribs
Pierced by the sunbeams. Thou too, Sainte
Chapelle,

Gem of the French metropolis, with gold
And jewel-tinted windows richly dight ;
And thou, quaint tower of Antwerp, with thy
 rings,

Ever diminishing, of carvèd stone,
Which front the weary voyager what time
Across the North Sea sailing he ascends
The winding current of the lazy Scheldt,— 370
Thou shalt not pass unheeded by my song.

Of these and many more, which to recount
Were to tell stones upon the pebbly shore,
The builders came; with names, the most,
 unwrit

In History's page, but in the Saviour's Heart
Well-known, and blazoned in His Book of
 Life.

Each bare in hand the dear similitude
Of his belovèd minster; some in wood,
Some carved in marble, some in brass or steel.
And as a priest with reverent hand devout 380
Raises the pyx or chalice, which enshrine
The Flesh and Blood of his ascended Lord;
E'en so these men with love and earnest care
Bore the dear emblems of their ancient fame.
Tunics, as witness of their art, wore they,
Whereon, in gold or silver thread, was wrought
The radiant Figure of their guardian Saint,

With this device thereto, ' Except the Lord
Do build the house, their labour is but lost
Who build it.' Them with kindly speech ad-
dressed

390

He by Whose Word Supreme the worlds were
made.

' All praise and honour be to the ardent souls
And hands obedient, which have made this
earth

Meet habitation for the saints of God !

Angels I call ye ; for angelic work,
Worthy of heaven's own shining ministers,
Inspired your fancies and employed your art.
Chiefly I him commend, who gathered first
To a fair point the rounded arch, and him 399
Who to a group of clustered stems transformed
The plain round column or the massive pier.
But much I praise, who first the docile glass
Taught to endue the dyes of heaven's bow,
Deep blues, carnations vying with the rose,
And purple hues, such as the pansy wears
Stretched like a wimple round her smiling face.
Much too,—who bent the square and rigid
tower

Into a soaring pyramid, which as flame,
Or topmost needle of aerial pine,
Turned to the skies its head continually. 410

How shall I too much bless the gentle hands,
Who clothed with veinèd leaf and fruit and
flower

The smooth white marble or the plastic stone?
Or those whose graceful fancy broke the flood
Of sunlight with fair perforated forms
Of curious tracery, till the carvèd stone
Showed like some forest-tree, which, many-
branched

And leaf-enshrouded, lets the beams of day
Dance through the mazes of its chequered
screen?

Your mighty temples are the Lord's delight,
Who dowers with endless life your works and
ye.' 421

So speaking, He dismissed them; and a
band

Of organ-builders next in order came,
Bell-founders too, and carpenters and smiths,
Who wrought fair ornaments in wood or brass,
Meet for the hearth and dwelling-place of God:
Those too, whose cunning art designed and
wrought

From squares and lozenges of tinted glass
Pictures of God or Saint, imperishable,
Such as adorn thy gorgeous cupolas, 430
Flower of the world, fair minster of St. Mark!

All these the Master greeted, most of all
Praising the mighty frames, potent to match
The diverse harmonies of earth and heaven,—
Now the deep thunder, now the rush and sweep
Of the tumultuous whirlwind, now sweet tones
Of mellow trump, or human voice divine.

When day was ended, in the imperial hall
High banquet was prepared, whereto were
called
Legates and knights from many a Christian
state. 440

Electors of the Holy Empire, clothed
In tabards of their office, served the Lord,
Bearing in golden vessel, this the meat
And that the wine. But when the feast was
done,

Uprose a Frankish orator, and thus
Discoursed before them in the Roman tongue.
'Princes, electors, knights of the olden time,
And thou, great Kaiser, Who, Thy starry
throne

Forsaking to revisit this poor earth, 449
Wieldest again the sceptre of Charlemagne,
King of the Kings of Europe! be not wroth,
If for the glorious country of my birth
I lift my voice, and claim the second place,

If not the foremost, for the realm of France.
For look, what land hath nursed a race of
Kings

So mighty and so victorious? what Church
Can match the splendour of our Gothic fanes?
What race excel our wit and courtesy?
What English, nay, what Greek or Roman
chief

Equals in might our warlike emperor, 460
Who made and unmade kingdoms, fighting
sole

Against the strength of leaguèd Christendom?
Therefore from French hands do Thou deign
accept,

If not the imperial wreath, at least the crown
Of our renownèd and Most Christian Kings.'

To whom the King of angels and of men,
'Great fame were yours, and honour less than
none,

Children of France, if but your feats of arms,
Your lofty enterprize, and lettered skill
With wisdom and fair piety were crowned. 470
But now the scutcheon of your fame is soiled
By many a deed of wrong and violence.

Your race long time hath been the bane and
scourge
Of Christian Europe; like some comet wild,

Whose fitful and outrageous course alarms
The rhythmic movements of the peaceful
spheres.

No crown of France shall therefore press My
Head ;

Nor eagles of your short-lived emperor
Shine in My triumph. Yet your mighty men—
Those who by prowess in the field, and those
Who by their puissant pens were glorified,— 481
Here shall receive the meed of their renown.

Bid the great warrior come, whose fearful sword
Wrecked the slow fabric of a thousand years ;
And him, whose courtly satire and shrewd wit
Mirrored the faults and foibles of his kind,
Molière, of Attic Aristophanes

Fit rival. Nor let Louis not be there^f,
Louis—despoiler of the nations' weal ;
Only in weeds of mourning let him stand, 490
Unsceptred and uncrowned : so haply best
Shall the vain monarch purge his greed of
fame.

No more I punish him ; for sure his ghost
Had chastisement enow and penance full,
What time the squalid and rebellious mob
Besieged his vaunted palace-gates, and tore
His meek successor from the ancestral throne.

^f Louis XIV.

O vain ambition of weak mortal men !
How less than nothing is the glare of fame
Where lack true wisdom and right, reverent
fear! 500
But Thou, Almighty Father, Whose clear Eye,
As in a faultless mirror, doth behold
The counsels of all hearts ! look down and save
This wayward people ; lest with lamps un-
trimmed
They meet the Bridegroom, and the doors be
shut,
And night surprise them groping in the dark.'
So spake the Master ; and their souls were
filled,
Hearing His words, with grief and deep regret.
Then Charles, the lord of Spain and Germany,
(The same, who, surfeited of kingly pomp, 510
In a still convent closed his pilgrimage),
Charles—King and Kaiser^g, whose colossal
realm
Stretched from the lone Rock to the far North
Sea,—
Drew near, and clasped the Knees of the
heavenly King,
Crying, 'O Lord of Glory, Lord of Grace !
Let not the sins of Spain be stored always

^g Charles V.

In Thy remembrance ; for we sinned at least
 Not for ourselves, but for the cause of God.
 If, then, with many a blood-stained sacrifice
 Our country smoked ; if tears, nor added
 prayers,

520

Nor ties of kinsmanship availed to move
 The stern tribunal ^b ; yet we purged our land
 Of the soul-poisoning leaven of heresy,
 And the Church triumphed, while the nation
 bled.

Haply the souls, who passed through fire to
 Christ,

Now little reck their torments ; and rejoice,
 Beholding their dear land for ever rid
 Of a worse plague than fire or pestilence.
 Wherefore, dear Lord, on sunny Spain bestow
 The Light of Thy sweet Presence : for we
 too

530

Boast many a fair cathedral, many a shrine,
 Palace and hall, with richest art adorned.
 What royal court for beauty and rare delight
 With our Alhambra vies ? what tower can
 match

Seville's Giralda ? What more sumptuous fane
 Graces the much-famed towns of Italy
 Than grim Toledo's venerable pile ?

^b The Inquisition.

O wert Thou there on Corpus Christi day,
When through the streets and up the dark
expanse

Of the great nave, beneath a canopy 540
Silken and gold-inwrought, by mitred priest
Aloft the shrinèd Host is borne, a Sign
And Wonder to the kneeling multitude !'

'Nay,' said the Lord, 'whose hands usurped
the right,

Which to the Eternal Father doth belong,
Win not such meed of honour from His Son.
God is a jealous God, nor brooks that man
Wield the dread bolts of His avenging Ire.
But now, that their vexed spirits may have
peace,

Whom your presumptuous and unhallowed
zeal 550

Consigned to nameless torture and the flames,—
Sing we a requiem for the wilful souls,
Who died, that Christ might be no longer
One.'

So they made haste, and in the imperial shrine
Built a high catafalque, and ranged around
Great, massy candlesticks of well-chased ore ;
Then bare of feet, and with uncovered heads
Chanted the 'Dies iræ.' Mournful rose
Beneath the vaulted roof the solemn dirge : 559

And now the trumpet of the Archangel rang,
Or seemed to ring, pervading earth and sky
With its strange soundⁱ: and now the Judge
 was seen

(So vivid was the strain of the ancient hymn,) To mount His seat, and o'er the trembling earth

Pronounce His doom of bliss or endless woe.

Anon from boyish voices the sweet prayer
Was breathed to heaven, ‘Remember, Jesu kind,
How that for me Thou troddest the sad road ;
And in that Awful Day forsake me not.’ 569
Then, ‘Peace and rest at length,’ so pleaded all,
‘Grant them Thy Peace, dear Jesus, peace that
 words

May not express, nor human heart conceive,—
Thy Peace divine and everlasting rest.’

Thus for the martyred heretics’ repose
Sang they and ceased not ; while wreathèd fumes,
Of incense floated round the sacred walls,
And the huge catafalque, and the kneeling
 men ;

Till the black-robèd car of spangled Night
Stood in mid heaven, and now her sable steeds

ⁱ ‘Tuba mirum spargens sonum.’

^j ‘Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quam sum causa Tuæ viæ.’

Grew paler towards the fresh approach of Day.
Then they with heart repentant, and tired eyes
Heavy with watching, laid them down and
slept 582

Till in the heavens uprose the newborn sun.

Thrice did the gentle arbitress of night
Around our planet wheel her measured course,
Yet did the Master with His chosen Knights
In the fair City linger. And in truth
Each day some new thing to be seen or done,
Some master-work of minstrel, bard or sage,
Some council of high state or embassy 590
Waited His Presence. For there is not, Lord,
One innocent joy that stirs the human breast,
But strikes a chord in Thy responsive Heart.
Now to the clear strains of the Magic Flute^k
He listened with delight ; now heard the doom
Passed by the vengeful and unearthly voice
Of the grim Statue on the faithless Don^l :
Or, seated in the royal théâtre,
Heard the lone musings of unhappy Faust,
Whom, raising to his lips the poisoned cup, 600
The choir of seraphs called to earth again,
Chanting at break of day the Paschal hymn ^m.

k Il Flaute Magico.

¹ Don Giovanni.

^m See Faust, Act I, Sc. I.

At times He laid the imperial crown aside,
And, robed as Pontiff, chanted the sweet prayers,
Which, more than all the lengthened orisons
Writ in these later days, exalt and soothe
The gentle soul, which casts itself on God,
Knowing its frailty and its Father's Love.

Chiefly He honoured thus the joyous feast,
Which, like the star that ushers in the night, 610
Heralds the dim days of November drear.
For on that day the Church commemorates
Her saints and heroes, whose illustrious tale,
Stretching far back into the misty past,
Marks with a track of glory and illumes
The dark, tumultuous annals of our race.
On this same day, within Saint Stephen's shrine,
A band of lesser singers from all lands
Came to salute Him ;—English Wesley first,
Who taught how unison with harmony, 620
As gold with jewels, may be blent ; no hand
More skilled than his to wield the various tones
Of the spirit-stirring organ ; Schumann next,
Deep and intense ; then Schubert, soft and
wild ;
Grave Palestrina, prince of antique song ;
Tallis and Kent, well-known (where song is
best)
In English minsters ; Gounod next, who framed

A light ethereal music, all his own,
And sweetly praised the Child of Bethlehem ;
Rossini, brilliant Weber, Himmel too, 630
Known for one song, but that of purest worth.

But when the solemn Litany was said,
Outswelled in stately pæan, like the roar
Of tempest, or mixed sound of horn and drum
Borne on the breeze from distant marching
host,

The loud-voiced organ ; and the obedient choir,
Answering its jubilant, imperious call,
In praise of all the illustrious company
Of prophets, saints and martyrs, sang this hymn.

‘ O Lord, we thank Thy Holy Name 640
For all who suffered grief and shame,
To win a place at His dear Side,
Who for our sakes was crucified.

‘ Nor less for those, who heard the beat
Far off of Thine approaching Feet,
And to the world in days of old :
Glad tidings of Thy coming told.

‘ God said, “ When I new earth and heaven
Shall make, and throughly purge the leaven
Of sin and sin-born doubt and fear, 650
Then shall My Saints on earth appear.

“ My later children then shall trace
The features of each glorious face,
And round the Throne with one accord
Exalt their risen Priest and Lord.”

‘ Such was Thy promise, Lord, but we
That faithful Word accomplished see,
Hear with our ears the Master’s Voice,
And in his Light of Light rejoice.

‘ Around us throng the blessed dead ; 660
The Lord of Hosts is at our head ;
To Him an endless realm is given,
And earth is in His Presence heaven.’

There is a famous avenue, without
The confines of the City, thickly set
With trees on either side, and ranging far
Into the region fed by Danaw’s stream.
Here on a day appointed a high throne
With canopy of golden cloth was raised
Where first the trees divide ; and here the men,
Who in the ‘ Battle of the Nations ’ fought 671
Round Leipsic, marched before their peaceful
King.

See the vast multitude,—French, Austrian, Pole,
Russian and German,—who for three long days
Compassed about the little Saxon town,

Contending, these for freedom, those for power !
Last of the long and sad procession,
Booted and cloaked, with hat upon his brow
Set crosswise ; dark, unmoved, impenetrable ;
Rode the great Conqueror, who filled the world
With terror of his name ; dethroning kings, 681
Subduing nations ; till the skies rebelled,
And, whom no sword of man availed to check,
Fled, by the snows of heaven discomfited.
Not thus withal did his untempered soul
Learn to submit : but from his native land
Gathering new legions, once more he essayed
O'er Europe to let loose the dogs of war.
Then did the nations, eager for revenge,
Join league against him, and from North, East,

West

690

Streaming,—a motley host, fired by one will,—
Brought him to bay at length on Leipsic plain.
Now he, whose sword made other lands to quake,
Was fain to shield his own ; for, close pursued,
As hart by troop of yelping hounds, he urged
His backward step through the fair land of
France ;

Nor resting even there, was driven perforce
Within the sea-girt bounds of Elba's isle 699
To dwell inglorious.

He then, as he reached

The imperial seat, from horse dismounting slow,
 Bent him before the Lord of Might and Love.
 Whom the kind Judge thus at His Bar ar-
 raigned,

Speaking, ‘O thou, whose sword insatiate
 Made many a father childless ! sayst thou aught
 To cloak thy crimes and many deeds of blood ?’
 Him then with downcast visage and low speech
 Answered the warlike chief of Corsica :

‘The men of France, as sheep unshepherded,
 Wandered, the spoil of many a ravening wolf,
 Kingless, without a guide ; till I stood forth,
 And on the stranger turned the sword, which
 else

712

Had preyed upon herself. Bethink Thee, Lord,
 Through what sore agony our hapless land
 Won her brief spell of glory and renown.
 Nor do Thou wholly scorn the valiant deeds,
 Albeit unjust, of our victorious arms.

In truth all Europe, but for English gold,—
 Aye, and perchance Egypt and Asia too,—
 Beneath our sceptre and imperial rule 720
 Had bowed the neck ; and France had been as
 Rome,

Queen of the lands, as England of the sea.
 Therefore do Thou some meed of honour yield
 To men, who fought, if vainly, yet so well.

But if Thou have no pity, and the cause,
For which our blood was shed, wipe wholly out
The fame of our achievement ; on this head
Visit Thy wrath : for these poor children mine,
How erred they, hearkening to their chief's
command ?'

To whom the world's Redeemer answering
said; 730

' His truly were a heart of stone, O prince,
(For prince I deem thee, though no royal blood
Flow in thy veins,) who, of thy martial feats
Reading or hearing, gave but niggard praise :
For of the world's great captains thou art
first.

Not Alexander, the brave Grecian king,
Nor Punic Hannibal, nor he who fought
Upon the glorious field of Marathon,
Not he, whose skill at length subdued thine
own,

Matched the full might of thy victorious sword.
Nor is it meet thy soldiers bear the palm, 741
Thyself uncrowned ; for in the thickest fight,
Mid storm of leaden hail and sulphurous smoke,
Silent and fearless thou wast wont to range.
Wherefore to ye and your less valorous foes
I give praise equal, and extol in turn
Ye for mere glory striving well, and them

Upholding weak hands in a righteous cause.'
Thus speaking, to His Side He straightway
hailed

The rival chiefs of each assembled host, 750
And of His Holy Empire dubbed them knights.

Now o'er the branches, of their summer
wealth

Despoilèd, shed its gleam of doubtful gold
The last faint splendour of the auctumnal day.
Therefore the Master, rising, through the lines
Of armèd men, thick-massed on either side,
Rode swiftly citywards. But as He touched
The portals of His palace, a sad throng
Of wayworn beggars, clothed in rags unclean,
Haggard of look and famished, met His gaze :—
Not more unsightly or leprous to behold 761
The doomèd crew, which on the murky banks
Of fabled Styx stood shivering, till the bark
And its grim ferryman should waft them o'er.
And as on men, who lie the livelong night
Sleepless, oppressed by want or fell disease,
Unwelcome stream the beams of cheering day ;
So they, regarding Heaven's immortal King,
Their gaze averted, and with hands outstretched
Prayed for the cold and dreamless sleep of
Death : 770

Who none the more to them beseeching came,

Nor cast his cloak of damp oblivion
O'er the dread past. Before their eyes dis-
traught

Flitted or seemed to flit continually
Some ghastly record of their ancient lives :
While, writ across the wrathful firmament,
Shone the red letters of their hated names,
DANTON, MARAT and bloody ROBESPIERRE.

'See, see !' in fearful concert they cried out,
'The streets run blood, the fatal tumbril moves
With its yet living freight, and yonder stands
The monstrous engine with its falling knife.' 782
Christ heard and pitied, and His plenteous
grace

Blotted the horrid phantom from their eyes.
They, trembling and astonished, cast them
down

Before His Feet, and dared at length look up
On the sad Face of their redeeming Lord :
Whereon who gazed, believing, was made whole.

At night within His Burg the King of Kings
Called an imperial Council. To His Throne
Princes from all the realms of Europe came, 791
To yield obeisance to their Sovereign Head.
Here was Gustavus, who from Danish chains ⁿ

ⁿ Gustavus Vasa.

Freed his afflicted country ; at his side
 Adolphus, champion of the famous war^o,
 Which rent in twain the realms of Germany.
 Here Charles, the Swedish lion ; there ap-
 peared

Peter, his Russian rival : after these
 Francis the gay and gallant Cavalier,
 Who, craving empire, well-nigh lost his crown^p ;
 Henry, protesting prince, conforming king^q ;
 And hapless Louis, who reigned and did not
 reign,

802

A captive in his royal capital,
 A boy, slain innocent for others' sin^r.

After the kings came throng, not less re-
 nowned,
 Of captains bold, philosophers and bards.
 Here was the chief, who turned, at Waterloo,
 Defeat scarce doubtful to most certain rout ;
 Egmont and Orange, of their country's rights
 Champions ; brave Wallenstein and cautious
 Daun ;

810

Then Goethe,—with majestic front serene,
 A Christian Zeus, of German minstrelsy
 Monarch, yet reaching not the height withal,

^o The Thirty Years' war.

^p Francis I. of France, made prisoner by Emperor Charles V.

^q Henry IV. of France. ^r Louis XVII.

Where on the summit of Parnassus sit
With the great Florentine the immortal Three.
He bowed his reverend head, and humbly
spake ;

‘ See one, great Arbiter of bards and men !
Who not disdained to gather up the crumbs
From Shakespeare’s mighty banquet. Yet this
praise

Accord me, if Thou will, that since his time 820
None hath excelled my philosophic song.
I am the bard of the world’s iron age,
As Shakespeare sings the days of chivalry :
In me the doubting soul, who sees not God
Nor fears, yet feels Him in the heart and
loves ,

Reads the reflection of his doubts and hope.’
Then deep-eyed, pensive Heine, who first
taught

The scarce articulate voice of Germany
To warble wild and free,—through intense
thought
Simple, and artless-seeming through much
art,— 830

Came, with his Hebrew harp, and dubious
smile,
(A smile, half for the world, which praised his
song,

Half for himself, who courted the world's
praise,))

Singing, ' Beside the streams of Babylon,
In mind a Christian, yet in heart a Jew,
I tuned my harp, the while remembering thee,
O Israel, and the sorrows of my race.

And now of Mary, the sweet Mother-maid,
Now of the depths of mine own inmost soul,
Once of Himself the Eternal ONE-IN-THREE
Mournful I sang, and loved to deem myself,
If not to Christ, yet to His Blessed Spirit 842
A loyal knight at least and serviceable⁷.

But seeing Thee, I fain would win my spurs
As liege knight to the King and Kaiser Christ,'
Good, generous, faithful Schiller next drew
near,

Who praised the heroes of his native land,
Bold Wallenstein and doughty William Tell;
And deep-despairing Musset, whose sad heart
Bred a new music for his Gallic tongue⁸; 850
With Hugo, whose aspiring muse with wing
Unfledged now courts the ground, now flouts
the sun.

After the bards came painters from the land
Which skirts the northern sea;—bold Rubens
first,

Prince of his craft,—lover of gorgeous hues,

Rich robes, bright generous faces, sunburnt
limbs,

All things magnificent and all things strong :
Then Ruysdaël, whose pencil caught the flash
Of falling streams, the gloss of velvet leaves,
And autumn's golden finger on the woods ;
With mild Vandyke and faultless Hobbema.

Thou too, sweet Claude, who broughtest to our
ken

862

Scenes of delight, the haunt of nymph and
god,

Back from the joyous childhood of the world ;
And thou wast there, stern Dürer, like thy
knight,

Composed and resolute ; and thou, Van Eyck,
Quaint dreamer, now beheldest with thine eyes,
Alive and compassed by His risen saints,
The Lamb, before the world's foundation slain ⁹.

Towards midnight, in the great imperial hall,
Round the wide hearth, where many a pine-
wood log

871

Blazed cheerful, as in Yule-tides long ago,
Sages and scholars came, to greet their Lord.
Behold pure Reason's champion, famous Kant !
See Hegel, shrouded thick in odorous fumes,
Scarce less substantial than the sage's thought ;

Against whose dreams and learning quick
Voltaire

Plied his malicious and well-pointed wit !

Near these sate readers of the silent stars,—

Copernicus, who from the wandering orbs 880
Their secret wrung, great Newton, bold Lap-
lace ;

And they whose searching crucible resolved
Into their light, primeval elements

Earth, sea and air ; and who the virtue learnt
Of herbs occult to baffle mortal pain ;

And whose laborious skill interpreted

Hid treasures of the Greek or Latin muse

To later ages. These with soul intent

Compassed their Lord, and hearkened to His
speech

Wondering ; as erst within the Temple's court

Old Hebrew Rabbis wondered, when the Boy,

Placed in their midst, both heard and questioned
them, 892

Revolving the deep things of earth and heaven.

Then, when the full-orbed moon reigned
overhead,

Once more to Stephen's fane He fared alone ;

Crossed the dim, quiet nave, which glimmered
fair,

Lit by the red lamp and the Queen of night ;
And kneeling prayed. To Whom three radiant
forms,
Clad in white raiment, crowned with stars, as
once
On Tabor's sacred mount, forthwith appeared ;
And the Divine Effulgence filled the place. 901
Then was the sound of wings and voices heard,
As from a multitude of the heavenly host
Thronging without to meet their King. Anon,
Cleaving the night, exultant, through mid-air
Swept the long triumph of the Sons of God,
Bearing the Lord of Glory in their midst.

NOTES TO BOOK X.

- 1 l. 5. Vienna was twice besieged by the Turks, 1) by Soliman II., in the year A.D. 1529; 2) by Mohammed IV., A.D. 1683.
- 2 l. 15. The title 'Apostolic Majesty,' borne by the Hapsburg monarchs, was granted, in the same way as the English title 'Defender of the Faith,' by the Pope. It is not one of the ancient titles inherited from the Holy Roman emperors.
- 3 l. 16. The Viennese pride themselves especially on their 'gemüthlichkeit,' a word which may be paraphrased as 'genial courtesy, with a dash of old-German sentimentality.'
- 4 l. 111. I do not hereby mean to pronounce an opinion as to the identity of the insignia, now preserved in the Hofburg, with those discovered in the tomb at Aix. The Viennese authorities claim this identity for the Book of the Gospels only. It is, however, extraordinary that so interesting a relic as the crown, found on the dead emperor's head, should have entirely disappeared.
- 5 l. 553. It is difficult to acquit the continental reformers of wanton and deliberate schism. The religious societies founded by Luther and Calvin not only broke off from the main body of the Church, but made no effort to link themselves to their Catholic predecessors.
- 6 l. 825. See Faust, Scene 'Wald und Höhle' between Faust and Marguerite.

"Wer darf Ihn nennen?
Und wer bekennen, 'Ich glaub' Ihn?'
Wer empfinden,
Und sich überwinden zu sagen 'Ich glaub' Ihn nicht?'"

7 1. 843. The references are to the songs beginning 'Am Fenster stand die Mutter,' 'Du schönes Fischermädchen,' and to the 'Harzreise,' all from the 'Buch der Lieder.'

8 1. 850. There is a pathetic music about the opening lines of 'Rolla,' quite foreign to the elder school of French poetry. Compare the beautiful lines beginning,

'Eh bien ! qu'il soit permis d'en baisser la poussière
Au moins crédule enfant de ce siècle sans foi,
Et de pleurer Ô Christ ! sur cette froide terre,
Qui vivait de Ta Mort, et qui mourra sans Toi.'

9 1. 869. Van Eyck's master-piece is a representation of the 'Lamb on Mount Sion,' surrounded by Angels and Saints.

BOOK XI.

England, 3.

ARGUMENT.

The Lord with His Angels appears suddenly in the little church at Hursley, where Laud and the chiefs of the Anglo-Catholic revival are assembled. He afterwards appears at Winchester, and there meets Wykeham with his scholars, and the sovereigns of England : proceeding thence to Oxford.

NOW, having traversed with much labouring foot
Six mighty rounds of mortal destiny,
Joyful I gird me for the seventh and last.
Faces familiar greet me, as I pass,
And voices well-beloved ; for England now,
English endurance, English fame and skill
Command my breath and animate my song.
O realm of realms, God-nurtured, heaven-caressed,
Not, like the huge shade of imperial Rome,
Darkening the world ; nor yet, like sunny
Greece,
Dazzling the minds of men with sudden blaze

Of art, high wisdom and harmonious song ;
Yet dowered with somewhat of the Roman
strength,
And somewhat too of the Hellen's genial fire !
For not e'en Rome, in zenith of her power,
Grasped a dominion, o'er two hemispheres
Spread, from the rising to the setting sun ;
While, dominant beside the Muses' well,
Sits the great shade of England's peerless bard.
O Church, firm-built on Christ thy Corner-stone,
Whose walls are Truth, whose gates are Right-
eousness,

21

And Love the coping of thy glorious roof !
What if thy wisdom and large tolerance
Should bind once more in bonds of amity
Contending factions of the West and East¹ ;
Heal the wide breach of ancient schism, and
knit

In one Communion indivisible
Divided Christendom to Christ its Head ?
O Church, O realm, close-wedded, two in
one !

Yet closerier weld your heaven-blest union : 30
So He, in Whom all loveliest things subsist,
Shall at His bright appearing reckon ye
As gold well-tried, and mark ye for His own,
And grant new bloom of coëternal life.

As, when the waters of some ice-boun
stream,

Warmed by the balmy winds of spring, throw
off

Their wintry fetters, quick from thorp to thorp
Speed the glad tidings, echoed down the banks
By glare of bonfire or by noise of gun ;
So, as the shining pursuivants of Christ 40
Traversed the heavens, the dwellers in each
town

Kept watch, if haply, staying their bold flight,
The swift-winged Seraphim should deign awhile
Within their walls to abide. But not the
towers,

Heavenward aspiring, of renowned Cologne,
Nor Prague's quaint citadel, nor royal Rheims
Lured the bright couriers from their starry
track.

Far overhead, above the cloistered hills,
Where mighty Danaw rolls his ample stream,
Above the banks of the blue, snow-fed Rhine,
Across the watery causeway, which divides 51
The realms of France and England, fared the
troop

Celestial, nor once checked their airy course,
Till the bright meadows smooth, and hedge-
rows trim

Of the world's garden, our own British isle,
Glimmered beneath the starlight at their feet.

There is a little village, which doth lie
Amid the green slopes of the Hampshire hills,
Nestling half-hidden in a smiling grove, 59
Where the sweet singer dwelt and latest born
Of English saints. Here first the heavenly
throng

Lighted on earth, and through the quiet lanes
Tracing their way unnoticed, gained at length
The grass-decked borders of the Gothic church.

Sweet harbingers of heaven, whose moss-
grown towers
Or airy tapering fingers gem the woods
And moors and hill-sides of each English shire !
Hearts of our simple village life are ye,
Where rude desires and jealousies are hushed,
And the calm soul, disburdened, tastes awhile
The stedfast bliss of its eternal Home. 70
Voices moreover have ye, which entice
The doubtful worshipper from cot or hall ;
Which waft the passing soul to Paradise,
And through the watches of dark wintry nights
Tell out the glad tale of the Saviour's birth.
What though the summer prime from field and
hill

Have fled, and o'er the misty landskip hang
The dull, grey curtain of an English sky :
What though no well-wrought cornice nor high
 porch

Deck the poor cotter's homestead ; yet hard by
Stands a more excellent mansion, where the
walls

Are fretted stone or marble, and whose light,
Broken by mullions fair, is deep imbued
With rich hues, borrowed from the bow of
heaven.

It was the hour, when Night, retreating slow,
Flies at the approach of rosy-mantled Day :
Each blade of grass, each trunk and leafless twig
Glistened with hoarfrost, and the rustic spire 89
Caught the first day-spring on its lofty vane ;
When, clad in linen robes, these red, those blue,
Seamless,—a cross of light on every breast,
A star of silver flame on every brow,—
With sober feet into the temple pressed
The choir angelic. From the church-tower
pealed

The jocund bells unbidden, and sweet sound
Of blended tones, harmonious, many-voiced,
Broke from the slumbering organ, and set loose
The imprisoned echoes of the peaceful shrine.

Knelt far within a band of worshippers, 100
In decent surplice and black silken stole
Clothed, (for the servants of our Master's court
Wear, as is meet, the sable yoke of Christ
O'er the white emblem of His purity).
Right in the midst, with hands uplifted, prayed
The gentle pastor, whose inspirèd song
Doth with delight, like angels' minstrelsy,
Make glad each season of the Christian's year.
What bard or seer, since the last witness John
Who died at Patmos' isle, with clearer faith 110
Saw the bright vision of his absent Lord,
Followed the beatings of that bruised Heart
So closely, felt His sorrow, knew His joy,
As did this meek and simple English priest ?
And now to him, hid by no earth-born cloud,
The Saviour dear, Sun of his soul, stood nigh,
Whom he had sung so well, and loved so long.
Next him knelt one now from our Church es-
tranged,
And in the fold of the great mother Rome 119
Lost and absorbed.—O why, dear Master-mind,
Didst thou at length thy little flock forsake ?
Our Oxford scarce seems Oxford, reft of thee.
Thou wert the link which bound us to the
past,
The crowning jewel in the diadem,

Wrought out of English gold for the Head of Christ.—

Howbeit no more in princely scarlet clad
Mid the proud rulers of the adopted Church,
But with his English brethren, a plain priest,
Came he to greet his Master. Knelt hard by
A prelate bold, who bare the Martyr's palm,
Wearing the full white sleeves of lawn, and
robe

131

Of sable silk, wherewith our simpler Church
Loves to invest her foremost councillors.

He, when the base leaven of rebellious zeal
Harassed our land, arraigned on charge unjust,
Was by the headstrong people doomed at
length

To suffer death, and on the fatal block
Rendered his stedfast soul to God Who gave.
Two late-born champions of the faith like-
wise

139

Stood by their martyred brother,—one austere
With lofty brow devout and tonsured head ;
Tranquil and mild his comrade, with grey hair
And shaven chin,—well versed in lore, and
strong

To guard his own and his disciples' heart
On this side from the mists of schism, on that
From false enchantments of the Siren Rome.

These five within the furthest sanctuary
Prayed in the doubtful twilight, as the sound
Of angels' voices and of angels' feet
Stole on their ears; and when, believing
not 150
For too much joy, they from their knees
arose,
And turned to make obeisance, lo, the Lord
Flashed, as the new sun on some mountain-
peak,
Full on them, and from lips of seraphim
Rung in sweet symphony this hymn of praise.

' In Jewry once on Christmas night
The Prince of Peace and Lord of Light
On earth was born,
A Child forlorn.

' Hymns of glory sang we then, 160
Praise to God, good-will to men,
And hailed with joy
The Heavenly Boy.

' Now to earth He comes again,
As a King to rule and reign,
By man confest
Greatest and Best.

‘Where shall we meet Throne prepare
For Him Who lights with constant care
The golden eyes 170
Of the starry skies ?

‘Shall we waft Him to the land,
Where along the sunny strand
The warm winds blow,
And the waters glow ?

‘Or shall we on wings arise
And bear our Lord to Paradise,
There to abide
At the Father’s side ?

‘Nay, no longer need we roam; 180
England is His chosen home.
Here let Him rest,
Beloved and blest.

‘Pope and Kaiser, homage bring
To the Eternal English King.
Alleluia !
Amen.’

Now from each cottage and each homestead
near

Hearing the merry music of the bells,
Swarmed, young and old, the astonished vil-
lagers. 190

Chiefly the boys, who in the Lord's own
House

Were wont to minister, made haste to endue
Their garments white, so duly to present
The tribute, dear to God, of their infant praise.
But the first chorister, whose eager feet
Crossed the dim threshold, looking in, beheld
Christ and the blessed angels standing there.
Therefore in joy and much astonishment,
Hastening to meet his comrades, he made
known 199

Tidings of gladness that the Lord was come.
Then ran the village people, each his way,
And brought of fir and laurel ever-green,
Of ruddy-berried holly, too, good store,
To strow the pathway which their King should
tread.

He, with kind words and smile more eloquent
Blessed them : 'for in the wide world, to His
Heart

No spot was dearer than an English church :
Where wisdom blooms with worship, meetly
blent,
And the mind welcomes what the soul adores.'

The children came and touched His sacred
Hands ;

210

And He with outward gesture and clear act²
Showed His good-will towards them ; the old
men

Hung on the dear Words from His gracious
Lips.

But as they gazed and wondered, the bright
Form

Grew faint, as rosy clouds when the sun hath
fled,

And soon the Vision vanished from their
sight.

As travellers, roaming in some inland
glade,

Hear the sweet whisper of the wild sea-
waves

Ere they attain the crowning cliff, and view
Spread at its base the snowy-crested main : 220

Or as long lines of scintillating fire

Shoot from the pale horizon, ere the sun

Lifts his fair head, and chases Night away ;

So whispered tidings of the advancing Christ

Journeyed from heart to heart and lip to lip,

And a strange joy possessed the souls of
men,

Ere they beheld His Face or knew Him
near.

In thee, dear home of hallowed memories,
Queen of the shires which fringe our Southern
sea,

Where reigned our earliest princes, where was
reared

230

The stately fabric of our ancient school!—

Welled the great wave of joy, and shone
before

His Orient Presence. Therefore with the
dawn

Old Wykeham's scholars down the quiet
street,

Through the green, cloistered walk, and up the
nave

Of the great minster marched in order due,
To watch and pray beside their Founder's
tomb.

So, if perchance his venerable shade,
Called by the Lord of Life from the Unseen
Land,

239

Should burst the cerements, his faithful sons
Might hail his joyous advent: and this
hymn,

Marching and gathered round the tomb, sang
they:

'God rest his soul :—beneath yon holy shade³,

All mid the long-drawn arches' dim arcade ;
By God's own altar, where his heart had dwelt,
Within the chantry, where the boy had knelt,
Hid by twin columns of his well-loved dome,
Sleeps the good prelate in his long last home.

'He sleeps : we pilgrims, as in days of yore,

Kneel at his shrine and press the sacred floor ;

250

Bring flowers, and kindle tapers, which may shed

A dim mysterious glory round his head.

Since we, late offspring of these iron days,

Still tell, albeit in feebler notes, his praise ;

Laud the great name, long ages have not hid,
And see his image in the deeds he did.

'He sleeps : and as our mindful eyes we cast

Round these memorials of the living past,—

Those eyelids raised, that lofty face unmoved,

Those hands uplifted to the God he loved,—

'Twould seem some angel, hovering o'er his head,

261

Lit up the features of the marble dead ;

Brought the glad smile, which he did sometime
wear,

Back to his eyes, and moved his lips in prayer.

‘He sleeps: and proudly round the prelate
stand

The clustering columns, which his fancy
planned;

Proudly the well-shaped arches, wave on
wave,

Swell the long vista of his matchless nave;

Gladly the organ sweeps the note of song

High-vaulted roof and echoing aisles along; 270

Sweetly the bells each livelong day proclaim

Their silvery tribute to his honoured name.

‘He sleeps: but strong and glorious do
abide

Here, and where Isis rolls his classic tide,

Two piles, which, moulded by his guiding
hand,

Twinlike at Oxford and at Winton stand.

In Mary’s fair chapelle, which yonder lies,

How blaze the windows with imperial dyes!

How wall and pavement, by the sunbeams
kist,

279

Gleam as with sapphire and with amethyst!

Hark, in the sister chapel’s ampler shrine,

From voices sweet what melodies divine

In tones, to mortal ears not elsewhere given,
Echo the music of the saints in heaven !

‘ He sleeps : but, haply not beyond his ken,
Springs from his dust a race of loyal men :—
A race, which spent its happiest boyish years
Mid the grey haunts, his goodness still endears.
Ah ! many a branch, by Death’s rude sickle
shorn,

289

Now waits the beaming of a brighter morn ;
Ah ! many a leaflet in the sheltering earth
Sleeps with the noble root, which gave it
birth.

Yet doth the tree rear high his mighty head,
And fill each year the places of the dead ;—
A glorious trunk, built up of faithful souls,
In whom the tide of love and life yet rolls,
Life, which to God doth consecrate each
breath,

And love, which conquers fear and knows not
death.

‘ He sleeps : his name, on stedfast basement
set,

Lives unforgotten by his children yet. 300
His scholars still, five times each rolling year,
With praise and jubilee his fame revere :
Still stands his statue, guardian of the door,
Where con his sons the page of classic lore :

Still shines engraved the chantry where he lies

On the dear honour, which they chiefly prize^a.

‘Therefore, ye bells, ring a glad peal to-day
Over the hills and valleys far away ;
And let the wild notes of your magic song
Swell out and faint the charmèd air along. 310
Sing of a new world, bright with joy and praise

For Wykeham’s sons, more than in ancient days ;

Sing of a time, when all shall feel the fire,
Which burnt within the spirit of their sire ;—
A time, when each, refined from earthly care,

One holy brotherhood of love and prayer,
Shall hail the dawning Star of endless day
With the sweet hymn, which taught their boyish lips to pray^b.’

Thus round the tomb of the good bishop sang 319

The black-robed scholars of his famous school,
Kneeling beside the high and splendid shrine.
In truth no goodlier resting-place e’er graced Prelate, or warrior knight, or sovran king.

^a The gold medal. ^b The old hymn, ‘Jam lucis orto sidere.’

Two massy pillars of the enormous nave
Enclose it : on each side a screen of stone
Stretches from pier to pier, with slender
shafts

And double tier of arches, richly wrought.
High in the midst, beneath a ceilièd roof
Of fretted stone sky-tinted, ribbed with gold,
Three cowlèd brethren kneeling at his feet, 330
The robed and mitred bishop keeps his state.
And now, slow winding towards the southern
porch,
Trode once again the venerable aisle
The home-bound scholars, when a form august
To their astonished eyes was manifest.
With cloven mitre, as with tongues of fire,
His comely head was crowned ; a velvet cope,
Crimson, gold-broidered, gemmed with rubies
rare,
In ample folds hung clasped about his neck ;
Above his purple cassock a laced alb, 340
And a rich crozier in his hand bore he.
Straightway the sable-robèd children knew
William, their princely founder, and with joy
Hailed him of loyal school illustrious sire.
But he, ' The herald, not the Lord, am I.
Lift up your eyes and see, for now, e'en
now

Stands at your gates the King of earth and heaven.'

As thus he spake, a sound of many wings,
As when sweet zephyrs in the glad spring-tide

349

Wake all the rustling laughter of the woods,
Was heard in the air : anon the silvery call
Of trump celestial smote their ravished ears :
Then the great portal, of his own accord
Opening, revealed the seraphs and their King.
White was His raiment, and broad band of gold

Girdled His Breast, while rays of living flame

Proclaimed the Godhead on His shining Brow.
Whom the good bishop thus with reverent speech,

Awestruck, addressed : 'O Thou beyond all names.

359

Above all heavens exalted ; Prince of Peace,
God everlasting, Counsellor, Most High !
O girt with every symbol of man's power,—
Great Pontiff, puissant Emperor, King Supreme!—

Disdain not, with these ampler dignities
Crowned and arrayed, our homage to receive.
For as no temple or high-buttressed tower,

Based otherwhere than on the stedfast rock,
Endures ; so every nation, tribe or race,
Not trained in fear of God, soon falls away,
Consumed by civil strife or foreign foe. 370
Therefore where schools do flourish, thrives the
land,
And on their greatness is its glory built.
Look then with favour on this ancient school,
Parent and pattern of the studious homes
Sown through our England : for from this good
soil,
There hath arisen a seed of famous men,
Trained in the paths of duty, whose bright
names
Like stars bedeck the firmament of time,
And gild the quiet annals of our isle.
Through them in greatness and prosperity 380
Our land, with slowness hastening, hath grown
By its own strength, not swell'n by others'
hurt.
So haply, having reached its term of fame,
Not, like the fallen empires of past times,
Will it, in lawless license, overgrown,
Lose its stout heart, or own a tyrant's sway ;
But wisely sober, will upright maintain
The stalwart fabric of its ancient laws,
Loyal of soul, and faithful to the end.'

He ceased, and from the Northern transept
borne,

390

Voices arose, as from some distant quire,
Chaunting sweet anthems to the Lord of
Heaven,

Forthwith a well-graced troop of English
kings,—

Some children, some of manly form, and
part

In years well-stricken,—robed in crimson
capes

With ermine bound, and crowned with crowns
of gold,

Swept in fair order round the clustered piers
Of the huge nave. Two boys of royal mien
Headed the throng, the one with hazel eyes
Downcast, pale careworn cheek and light-brown
hair,

400

Wearing, upon his velvet robe besprent,
The flowering lilies and the crown of France ;
Blue-eyed his comrade, with thick flaxen curls,
A Saxon. Walked the next a stripling fair,
Like the young herald of the gods, who
dwells

Amid the cold waves of the Baltic sea,
Framed by the fancy of the famous Dane ^c.

^c Thorwaldsen.

The first was Henry,—of our British isles
And France, alone of all his royal line,
Crowned and anointed king :—whose generous
hand

410

Reared by the banks of Thames to Wykeham's
school

A princely rival. Who with knee low bent
Thus to the Man of Sorrows made his plaint.
' Most gracious Sire, behold the ill-fated king,
Last of the royal house of Lancaster,
Dowered with an alien crown, who lost his
own.

Small fame in council, less in feats of arms
Won I : but peaceful deeds earn glory too,
And the fair college, builded by my hand
Beneath old Windsor's castellated hill, 420
Hath been the nursery of a glorious line,—
Wise statesmen, doughty warriors,—which no
school

Of all since reared or matches or excels.'
A casket then he offered, of pure gold
Set round with sparkling gems, wherein were
stored

Coins old and new, in number as the kings,—
Guelph, Tudor, Stuart, or Plantagenet,—
Who reigned o'er Albion, and engraven each
With face and superscription of its king.

Next came the blue-eyed prince, to English
hearts 430

Than all his royal brethren more endeared,
Wise, gentle Alfred ; who (if aught avails
The long tradition of nine centuries,)
Planted, where Isis threads the smiling vale,
The Muses' hearth and home at Oxenford.
He in a golden censer offered gift
To Heaven's High Priest of odorous frank-
incense.

Last of the three, young Edward^d brought
the myrrh,
With little Richard, bright-haired, merry-eyed,
Fair as himself ; who, sleeping side by side,
By hand of cruel men were foully slain, 441
At their ambitious kinsman's stern command.

Then walked two valiant youths, in mail of
proof
Clad cap - à - pie, — first Henry, scourge of
France,
Who won the glorious fight of Agincourt,—
Henry, than whom no braver heart e'er beat,
Nor stouter hand drew bow or couched lance :—
Next him the flower of youthful chivalry,
Edward the Black Prince, whose unflinching
band

^d Edward V.

Of stalwart archers wrested victory 450
 From the French host at Crecy and Poitiers.
 Then came the royal martyr,—a sad man
 With pointed beard,—wearing a riband blue
 Clasped round his comely neck, to hide the scar
 Dealt by the murderous steel ; and at his side
 Edward, of nobler son the generous sire,
 Who to the men of Calais gave their lives,
 Won by the pleadings of his gentle spouse ^e.
 Then came a brave and bright-eyed boy, with
 cheeks
 Rosy and sunburnt, like some infant Mars, 460
 Last hope and glory of our Saxon line,
 Harold ; and with him, bold almost as he,
 The fair-haired prince, whose dauntless word
 and mien
 Won back the riotous and lawless throng
 To their allegiance from the rebel chief ^f.
 Then the first Edward with the second Charles
 Came, arm in arm,—the one to power inclined
 More than was meet, to pleasure and dull ease
 His comrade,—but by both great things were
 wrought. 469

This overcame the leaguèd Earls, whose might
 Drave his unwarlike parent from his throne ;
 That to his secret Cabinet first called

^e Edward III. and Queen Philippa. ^f Richard II.

A board of councillors, to stand midway
'Twixt king and people, now interpreting
To them the royal will, now theirs to him.
Next, one advanced alone of all the throng
Born nor of Saxon nor of Norman blood,
Arthur, much told in legendary lay.

Who in the farthest corner of our isle ^g 479
Built him a castle, where the coal-black rocks
Crystal-embedded, crowned with fiery gorse,
Are carved and jagged and splintered by the
waves

Of the great blue Atlantic, into spires
And towers and thousand shapes fantastical.
In life at Winchester he reigned and dwelt :
There round the Table met his chosen knights ;
But when he died, Avilion's wooded vale
Held him, beside the crested hill where sleeps
Joseph, the Lord's last friend and minister ^h.
After King Arthur walked a peaceful wight,
Old and grey-headed, son of that bad prince
Who with his own hands slew his rightful
king.

Of martial glory nought to boast had he ; 493
But other fame was his ; whose piety
Reared the great abbey, of our English fanes

^g Tintagel. ^h Joseph of Arimathea, said to have been buried at Glastonbury.

Loftiest, and crowned with most surpassing
graceⁱ.

Followed the hapless Edward, by foul act
Of his unnatural and faithless spouse
Tortured to death^j, and Henry clept Beauclerc,
With him who first of all our monarchs bore
The illustrious surname of Plantagenet. 501
Two kings were absent,—John, who stole his
crown.

And gave the same to Pontiff Innocent;
With Richard, doomed by the great poet's song
To everlasting meed of ill-renown.

Now did the royal pomp, returning slow,
March toward the chancel, while the Lord of
heaven
Walked with His white-robed seraphs after
them.

A tremulous murmur, swelling, like the wind
Which stirs the branches when a storm is
near, 510

Shook the huge pillars, shook the walls and roof
Of the ancient church: anon the pent-up sound
Swept, like a hurricane, from aisle to aisle,
Till every stone, rejoicing, echoed back
The innumerable shout of the great organ's
voice.

i Henry III.

Edward II.

Seemed it as though the minster were alive,
And like those orbèd wanderers, which in
heaven

(If poets err not) wheel their airy course
Not without music⁴, suddenly found tongue,
To greet the Mighty Master, in Whose name
And for Whose honour it was planned and
built.

521

In truth no rocky cliff nor pine-clad hill
Appears more part and piece of Nature's
frame.

For the grey stone is mellowed with the
moss

And lichen of seven hundred years : the bells
Have a soft distant music all their own,
Like angels' whispers or a dream from God.
Within, no royal palace, decked with gold,
Pictures and carpets rich and tapestry,
Showed ever half so splendid, half so fair. 530
Up the long nave, like Druid oaks, which stand
This way and that way in some ancient wood,
Range the great clustered columns, joining arm
In the high pointed arches overhead,
And soaring thence between interstices
Of gallery and window, till they twine
Their netted branchwork in the vaulted roof.
Not Strasburg, not the boasted fane of Rheims,

Nor Stephen's peerless shrine, for majesty 539
And strength and due proportion, can outvie
This mighty hall of hewn and carved stone.

All hail, dear minsters of my native land,
Sown through its length and breadth, like
flowers divine
Bright with the smile of God's own Face, and
straight
From Paradise transplanted to our earth!—
How can I rightly tell your varied grace?
Thine, Durham, with thy towers massive and
strong
Reared on a rocky terrace, at whose feet
Winds mid his verdant banks the slender
Wear?
Or thine, fair Lincoln, which at misty morn 550
Stands like a castle, by no hand of man
Fixed in the floating clouds? or thine, great
York,
If not the queen for beauty, yet the king
For size colossal of all English shrines?
What flower of architecture, more complete
In rhythmic union of well-ordered parts,
Sprung from the brain of Grecian Phidias,
Than Sarum's lovely temple? where the spire,
Dipping its fairy needle in the clouds,

Seems but the chief bloom of some noble
plant, 560
Spreading out leaves, flower, stem to one fair
whole ?

What tower in Europe touches the dim line,
Where mass and majesty are lost in grace,
Like that, which rises o'er the central vault
Of the great mother-church at Canterbury ?
In the red region of our midland shires,
Where thousand furnaces with lurid smoke
Fill the hot air, the spires of Lichfield raise
Their triple witness from the world to Christ.
No western front in the wide German realm,
Nor one in France, save only royal Rheims, 571
Can match thy deep-recessed and lofty porch,
Unrivalled Peterbro' ; nor aught know I
More lovely in their massive stedfastness,
Than the twin towers, which stand as sentinels
Northward and Southward, guarding on each
hand

The noble fane of Exeter. Nor thee
Must I forget, perchance the brightest gem
In all God's English garden, whose high walls
Are the great treasure-house, wherein are lodged
The prowess, wit, and poetry of our race,— 581
Divine of minsters ! black with length of days,
Shrouded in purple gloom impenetrable ;

Into whose awful and mysterious shade
The frolic sunbeams scarcely dare intrude ;
High holy place ! of our redeeming Lord
Meet monument, and worthy throne of Him,
Who, from our mortal vision deep withdrawn,
Dwells in the still courts of Eternity !

Now, when they reached the chancel, and
the kings 590

Along the pinnacled, well-carven stalls
Were duly ranged ; forth came the Conqueror,
Bearing in hand his ancient diadem,
And laid the same before the Master's Feet.
Who, crowned therewith and sceptred, took
His stand
At the eagle's outspread wings, and oped the
Book,
And read glad words of comfort, 'Lo, I saw
New heavens and a new earth, for the first
heaven

And the first earth had passèd clean away.'
Then He took up His parable, and spake 600
After this sort : 'Kings, who by Grace of
God
Once swayed the sceptre of these favoured
isles,
And ye, fair sons of Wykeham's ancient school !

I Christ, foretold by prophet and by sage
In ages past,—I, doomed by Highest God
To bring the golden years of peace again,
And seat fair Justice on her rightful throne,—
To-day make good My Promise, and restore
To earth her glory and man his heritage.
Yet in this world not all shall be made new :
Some things there be, stamped by the Hand
divine

611

As meet for earth, made heaven. This mighty
dome

Needs not the immortal Architect, to exalt
The height and splendour of its vaults sublime :
Only in winter, when the sun, exiled,
Shines coldly through a curtain of dark cloud,
Let the grey stone with lustre crystalline
Reflect and multiply his scantier beams,
And gild with new delight the shrunken day.
Nay more, the glorious image of Himself, 620
Graven by God on the human countenance,
Wants not divine addition, nor the rays
Of starry effluence ; only let no pain
Darken, nor sin destroy, its inborn light ;
And thus, with pristine health and innocence,
Let it win back the brightness of its prime.

‘ Perchance ye ask, how on this straitened
globe

Place may be found for the whole countless host,

Dead or yet living, who since Adam's birth
Have breathed the breath of life. Know then
that God

630

Appointed seven great orbs, beside this earth,
To work their revolutions round His sun.

In these the residue of mortal kind
Shall have fit dwelling-place,—or far from
Christ,

Or near, according to his virtue, each.

But lest they weep, divided by wide fields
Of desolating air from men they love ;
Hither at seasons due shall they return,
Join in the great Te Deum, and bow knee
Before the Sovereign of the world and stars.'

He spake : and Wykeham after the ancient
use

641

Lifting in token of the Eternal THREE
The half-stretched hand, gave parting words of
peace

And benediction. Then the princely throng
To Mary's college in procession meet
Wound their slow way. Here in the lofty
hall

The Lord took meat, and Him the attendant
kings,

Girt with a napkin, served with food and wine.

Then in the mead below, while yet survived
Beams of the short-lived wintry day, beside 650
The venerable planes, which had outlived
Full many a boyish generation,—
He watched the laughing youth, who now with
glee

Drove betwixt goal and goal the leatherne
ball,

Now leapt, or ran in eager rivalry.

But when the morrow's sun with orient ray
Shot through the rainbow-tinted glass, which
fills

The great East window of the chapel near,
The Lord endued arch-priestly rich attire,
Mitre and pall and cope ; and, robed therewith,
On Wykeham's head bestowed the crown of
Saint.

661

Around Him stood the radiant Seraphim,
Clad in white garments, who, the while He
prayed,

Waved to and fro their golden censers, rich
With odours sweet, the praises of His Church.
Anon the whole assembly rose from knee,
And to the listening ears of God outpoured
The slow, grave cadence of their Latin hymn ;

Then waited with bent head, while Christ the
Lord

Spake joyful words, and blessed their ancient
school, 670

Their walls, their Church, their country and
themselves.

Four days He tarried in the royal town,
Nor failed each day at morn and evensong
To tread the sacred courts, now lingering
In the vast nave, while priest and tuneful
quire

Told the sweet mystery of their far-off hymn ;
Now mingling with the white-robed company,
And with His own Voice lifting praise and
prayer

Unto the Eternal Sire of things and men.

But when the fifth morn laced the pearly
clouds 680

With fringe of gold, and o'er the frozen
grass

Scattered the diamonds from her wintry store ;
A band of English sailors, frank and bold,
As is their wont, before the gates appeared,
Saying, 'Where is He, Who loves all loyal
hearts,

The King our Master ? for a Voice from heaven

Calling us lately, while we slept at night,
Bade us fare hither, and do reverence
To Him Who guards the land and rules the sea.'
Whom Christ, beholding, welcomed with kind
words

690

And friendly greeting : ' Hail, brave pioneers
Of English fame and prowess in all lands
Lit by the southern and the northern stars !
What sea, what shore hath not your conquering
fleet

Traversed, your glorious flag not waved above ?
Of old the wild waves were the Greek's high-
way :

There, matched against his virtue, nought
availed

The crowd unskilful of his barbarous foe.
In after times, when dauntless Christopher
Braved the long billows of the Atlantic main,
And opened out to spirits adventurous

701

The novel treasures of a world unknown,—
Then strife arose, 'twixt Dutch and Portuguese,
Spaniard and English, which should reign
supreme,

And wield the imperious trident of the sea.
Now, all your rivals quelled, ye hold the crown
Unquestioned. Therefore, while fair Italy
Boasts her great Pontiffs, and the German race

Its Kaisers ; England for her simpler Kings
Claims the dominion of the boundless waves.
But now make haste and bear me company 711
To the fair city, which all good men love,
Oxford : for there, before the morrow's sun
Verge to his setting, I would fain abide.'

Then did the trusty sailors, four abreast,
March through the city, followed by their Lord.
But when they gained the confines of the town,
Where the great iron highway runs, which links
Imperial London to her southern port ;
Behold, drawn up along the track of steel, 720
Stood many a strong-built chariot, gaily decked
With wreaths of holly and blooms of amaranth.
At once a hale old man, upon whose breast
Blazed many an honourable cross and star,
Drew near, and thus bespake the Prince of
Heaven :

' My Lord, O King ! the sovereign of these
isles
Sends me, their foremost warrior, to present
Homage, as meet, and bear thee swiftly hence
Unto the destined City of Thy choice.
Nor Thou disdain the skill mechanical 730
And laboured triumphs of our late-born art.
See how yon engine, like some generous steed,
Chafes at delay, and vents his fiery breath.

Impatient. Yet,—one iron bolt set loose,—
The docile monster will his course pursue,
Swifter than racehorse or the swallow's flight,
Through hill, o'er vale, made level for his path.
Between thick mazes of diverging roads,
Guided by hand unseen, he threads his way
Unconscious; while a hundred sentinels 740
Beset his steps; a thousand wooden arms,
Outstretched at intervals athwart his track,
Warn him from peril, and direct his march.
But when he journeys through the dusky night,
Then like some fiery god, or comet fierce,
He flies exultant, casting from his throat
Red, flaming sparks, and shower of sulph'rous
hail.

Scattered beside his way, like beacon fires
Marking some royal progress, countless lamps,
Crimson or green or yellow, dart from high
Their various tale of welcome or rebuke, 751
Now urging haste, now counselling delay.
Yet nowise safelier, nor with speed so rare,
Reins his obedient horses, duly yoked,
The wariest driver on the king's highroad.
Therefore do Thou (albeit Thy Might divine
Need not our puny service) deign to essay
The flying cars, winged by Thy children's
skill.'

He said: and hearkening to his suasive words,

Within the wheelèd steam-drawn chariot 760
The Lord took seat, and swiftly cleft His way
Through the white barriers of the Hampshire hills;

Then, by a broader roadway, reached anon
Well-wooded glades of lovely Wallingford,
And thy fair park, well-known to studious youth,

Sequestered Nuneham, jewel of the stream.
And now the weather-beaten domes and spires
Of the sweet City, bathed in morning light,
Dawned on their view; and 'Oxford' was the cry,

As they drank in the magic of the place 770
With ardent eyes, and with enchanted ears
Heard the sweet witchery of her hundred bells.
For every bell from tower and steeple high
Broke into singing, till the frosty air
Itself seemed vocal with their melody.

'Rejoice, rejoice;' so sang their iron tongues,
'Christmas is near, and Christ is born again,—
Born to make good the long discomfiture
And weary penance of six thousand years,—
Born to be King, restorèd to His own, 780
Who once received Him not, but now with joy

Welcome the dayspring of His glad return.
Rejoice, rejoice ! eternal Christmastide
Melts in the sunshine of its hallowed mirth
All bitter memories and dark regrets,
All sorrows past, and dread of woes to come.
See, even now upon our threshold waits
The long-expected Saviour ; hark, e'en now
That Voice, whose accents waken from the
dead,
Tells the good tale of peace and endless life. 790
All hail, Deliverer, welcome to Thine earth,
Made Thine in truth, and Thine for evermore !'

NOTES TO BOOK XI.

- 1 l. 25. This hope was, I believe, first expressed by the late Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham.
- 2 l. 211. These words are taken from the Office for Holy Baptism. ‘Ye perceive how by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good-will toward them, for He embraced them in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them.’
- 3 l. 243. The following lines were written many years ago, almost as they now stand, for a school exercise; and are here inserted with the permission of the Warden.
- 4 l. 519. Cf. Merchant of Venice, Act v. 1.
‘There’s not the smallest orb, which thou behold’st,
But in his motion like an angel sings.’

BOOK XII.

England, 33.

ARGUMENT.

At Oxford the English poets and philosophers are gathered to meet the Lord, Who proceeds thence to London, where He meets Wellington and Nelson with the heroes of Waterloo and Trasalgar. Finally, at Westminster Abbey the seventh light on the symbolical Candlestick is kindled, and the poem closes.

HOU, at Whose Word the round earth
and the sky,
Smit by the new-born light, at first put on
The varied splendour of their rich attire,
Father of men and angels, Whose dear Name
Winged the first notes of this laborious song!—
Thee too its latest strains shall celebrate.
Angels, archangels, seraphs, messengers,
Spirits, and all the hierarchy of heaven,
By whose bright ministry the rays divine

Are bent and tempered for our mortal use ! 10
 Souls of the just, purged of their earthly
 pride !

Souls of the weak and sinful, now made
 strong

By chastening penance and correction wise !

Be with me now, and to mine eyes reveal

The last fulfilment of that mighty Plan

Inscrutab le, whereby the world is made

Meet for the Presence and the Reign of God.

Methought all vestiges of ancient ill^a

Had from the glorious City vanishèd.

Each spire and tower beneath the wintry
 sun

Shone out with novel lustre, as 'twere built 21
 With slabs of crystal, or of piled gems.

The streets were paven with untarnished blocks
 Of virgin silver, and the paths were gold.

Old Athens and imperial Rome had lent
 The priceless treasures of their antique art
 To swell the Christian triumph, and rejoiced
 In the new beauties of their English child.

For in the distance rose the Acropolis,
 Clear-cut against the sky, with pomp of shrines,
 And statues wrought in gold and ivory : 31

^a ‘Priscæ vestigia fraudis.’ Virg. Ecl. IV.

While nearer stood the Forum, and that Hill,
Whither brave consul and victorious prince
Hied to do homage at the shrine of Jove.
To match such splendours of the immortal
past,

The lesser triumphs of our modern art
Had waxed in grace and august dignity.
The spire of Mary with its double fane,
Whereto the learnèd doctors of the Church
Troop weekly, robed in scarlet,—had out-
grown

Its old dimensions, and the glistering point 41
To thrice its ancient height now soared aloft ;
While at its base a lofty minster rose.

The glories of the new world and the old,
Blent and transfigured by the glory of heaven,
Met in fair union, side by side ; as flowers
Open their youthful faces at the feet
Of some high-branched woodland patriarch,
While over all consummate reigns the sun.

O dear illustrious City ! where the past, 50
Inwoven with the present, lives and blooms
Eternal ; where sweet memories new and old
Revive, and once more mould the minds of
men,
Clothed in their ancient grace and energy !

Greece in the light of thee her youth regains ;
The ground quakes with the roll of brazen
cars ;

All earth rejoices, and each grove and stream
Thrills with heroic life and deity.

Old Rome forgets the rage of Alaric,
Forgets the fierce might of the furious Hun ; 60
Throws off her chains, and in thy wholesome
smile

Reigns o'er the world obedient to her nod.

Methought the mighty shades who here at
least

Have their peculiar shrine and proper home,
Leaving the lands and cities of their birth,
Hither had wandered : in this garden fair,
Wise Plato, with his pupil wiser still,
As in his own beloved Academy,
Canvassed the thoughts of God and ways of
men ;

There in the lively streets good Socrates 70
Drew from the husks of error seeds of truth :

Here Horace laughed ; there Virgil dreamed
and sang ;

And ancient Homer roamed, a grey-haired
child,

Watching the new world, as some grandsire
kind,

Who by the shore, or stretched on mossy
bank,
Beholds his sons' sons gambol at his feet.

Meanwhile about the Lord a glorious band,—
Priest, poet, sage,—the flower of English wit,
Thronged joyful: gowned was each, and wore
thereto,

Hung from the neck, a silken robe, of blue, 80
Crimson or scarlet, as beseemed his rank.
But he, whom all that well-famed company
Esteemed the most, bare on his lofty brow
The wreath, much-coveted, of woven bay.
Oval his face, well-shaped, with pointed beard
Trimmed to the chin, and earnest thoughtful
eyes.

Him not the father of all rhythmic song;
Nor the great Roman, who with Ilium linked
The fortunes of his City; nor the rage
And intense vision of the Italian seer, 90
Disturb,—high seated on his lonely throne.
Whom the sweet Prince of Heaven, regarding
long,

Hailed with kind greeting and well-earnèd
praise.

‘ O voice, beyond all mortal utterance
Potent to charm or melt the souls of men !

Who, like the fabled monarch of the winds,
Holdest imprisoned, at thy strong behest,
Love, pity, hatred, anger, hope, remorse,
Each high affection, each deep passion,
Which burns or smoulders in the human breast!
Poet of poets! at thy powerful spell 101
The grave gives us its secrets, and the dead
Throng at thy summons from their unseen
home.

Mid the profusion of thy wondrous song
What shall I most admire?' To Whom the
bard,

'Praise not too much the lyre, O Lord of
Grace,

Which clings to earth, and seldom soars to
heaven.

Matched with the lofty strain of Israel's seer,
How poor and grovelling is mine utmost skill;
Matched with Thy Words, how less than nought
at all! 110

Yet if Thy heavenlier temper find delight
In the fair pageant, and well-pictured show
Of mighty men and deeds of bygone fame;
Come Thou to-night within the tented space
Of yon colossal Roman théâtre.

There I with these my brethren will recount
How by the stroke of foul conspiracy

Was quenched the life of the world's greatest man.'

After the bard came Churchmen, not a few,
Led by renowned Wiclif, whose high zeal 120
First wrought reform in Christendom, and
first

Made clear the Word of our Salvation
To souls unskilled in Greek or Roman lore.
Followed right many a champion of the
Church,

Doomed by relentless Mary to the flames,
Ridley and Cranmer and bold Latimer ;
With Ken, whose vesper and whose matin
hymn

Of all our sacred songs are loved the most ;
And gentle Juxon, into whose kind ear
Were breathed the last words of our martyred
king. 130

Thou too, whose shrewd wit and persuasive
tongue

Won back its long-lost senate for our Church,
Prelate of Oxford ^b ! armed with pastoral staff,
Camest to greet thy Master ; and thou too,
Good upright Scotsman ! whose unflinching
hand

^b Bishop Wilberforce.

Through mists of schism and storms of heresy
 Guided to port the imperilled Ship of Christ ^c.
 Nor thou wast absent, mild and courteous
 head ^d,

Who first in one great Synod didst convoke
 The missionary prelates, far and wide 140
 Scattered, where'er the flag of England waves,
 To plant good seed of Christ mid heathen
 men;

Nor thou, by me most justly reverenced,
 Kind caustic scholar ^e! who for thirty years
 Heldest the sceptre of old Wykeham's school.

Now Wolsey, the great English Cardinal,
 Waynflete and Wykeham ¹, pressed with eager
 feet

Into the royal Presence, and besought,
 Each for his own fair college, that the Lord
 Would of His Grace set foot within their
 walls. 150

Said Wolsey first, ' Thrice welcome, heavenly
 King,
 To England's loyalest and fairest town ²!
 These grey stones and religious shades august
 Accord not ill with the years and Majesty

^c Archbishop Tait. ^d Archbishop Longley.

^e Bishop Moberly.

Of Him, Who was when Earth and Time were
not.

Thou, then, make choice ; for three perchance
are found

Amid these colleges and cloisters fair,
Which all their peers in loveliness excel.
No hall with mine, no chapel may compare
With Wykeham's ; but for rich variety 160
Of tower, hall, cloister, and high-archèd walk
Meet for the roaming steps of bard or sage,
All own the sovran grace of Magdalen.'

The Master heard, and to his house the first
Bent willing step. Whom, thronging round
their porch,

The Oxonian youth saluted,—of that age
When manhood strives with boyhood, which is
which.

For some indeed had limbs of Hercules,
And some the brow, which Phidias gave to
Jove,

Already scored with thought ; yet beamed
on all 170

The boy's serene and bright simplicity.

As when young soldiers, who for many a week
Have brooked the long march and laborious
drill,

At last are drawn out in complete array

To win the praises of their general ;
 So did the youth of Oxford greet their Prince.
 Then one pronounced, in cadence rhythmical,
 The full-phrased welcome of his Latin speech.

‘ Christ, in Whose Name these ancient walls
 were reared,

Great God, high Monarch, sage Philosopher !
 Not to the wise and prudent, but to babes, 181
 And childlike hearts Thou didst of old reveal
 The secret treasures of Thy heavenly lore.

Young were Thy first disciples ; young was he,
 Who leant upon Thy Breast in that dark night,
 When stiff-necked Pharisee and learnèd Scribe
 Conspired against Thy growing Deity.

Thou too Thyself wast young, before Thy
 time

Cut off, and numbered with the silent dead
 Ere thou hadst filled the term of mortal
 years. 190

Therefore on this great feast of earth restored,
 (Which is to us not Christmastide alone,
 But Christmas, Eastertide and Pentecost,
 Aye and divine Epiphany in one,)
 Scholar at once and teacher with sure hope
 Kneel at Thy Feet, and claim discipleship
 In the great school of the Arch - Preceptor
 Christ.’

So spake he ; and the Master with glad heart
Heard their outspoken welcome, and returned
Few words but gracious to their young ap-
plause. 200

'Thrice happy youth, into whose ears are
poured

The treasures thrice-distilled of human wit !
Who sit at Plato's feet ; who mark the flight
Of Virgil's soaring and melodious song ;
Who read the tale of mortal destiny,
And watch the mighty Drama of God un-
rolled,

As in a scroll, before your wondering gaze !
Blest are the eyes which see the things ye see,
And blest the minds which know the things ye
know !'

Anon His steps He to the hall addressed, 210
Where, ranged in painted semblance round the
walls,

The illustrious dead, in silent consistory,
Watch o'er the fortunes of their youthful
heirs.

To Whom, high-throned upon the daïs, came
A throng of bards right famous,—Chaucer first,
Father of English song, and with him one,
Whom at his true worth England knows not
yet,

The prophet of this doubting century,
Skilled to unveil the thoughts and hidden
springs

Of human action, and interpret clear. 220
The soul, which in things evil works for
good f.

Came too the champion of ungracious creed,
The bright rays of whose eloquence sublime
Gild, but ennable not a cause unjust,—
Treason twofold against his Church and
King,—

Milton ; and he, who better than his own
Loved the fair land of Homer and the
nymphs g ;

With that ethereal singer, whose wild notes
Soar, like his lark, above this cloudy sphere
Into the calm realms of eternal sun h. 230
Came too the white-haired minstrel of the
Lakes,

Who of the soul's birth, and the flowers and
woods,

And the sweet laughter of the waves and sky
Sang ; nor in death was sundered from the
spot

He loved so well, but mid his purple hills
Slept till the Master's voice awakened him i.

f Browning. g Byron. h Shelley. i Wordsworth.

Here was the poet-sage, whose antique verse
Told of the lost ship and its crew unkind,
Doomed, to avenge the fateful harmless bird^j.
There was the impetuous and untiring Scot,
Who to sad Constance and bold Marmion 241
Gave deathless fame; and there the tuneful
bard,

By whom King Arthur and his banded knights,
Rescued from cold oblivion, live again.
He too was there, whose legendary muse
Extolled the Arabian hero Thalaba
And praised the undying fire of heavenly
love^k:

Nor he was absent, who of knights and elves
In maze of quadruple and triple rhyme
Discoursed melodious^l; nor that minstrel
wild, 250

Whose own sun set the while his plaintive harp
Mourned the dethronèd god Hyperion.

All these came flocking to the Master's
Feet;
And He, remembering well each honoured head,
Spake words of praise: 'O choir of English
bards,

Crown and delight of this your native land!
What race can equal your illustrious line?

^j Coleridge.

^k Southey.

^l Spenser.

Leave sculpture to fair Athens, and let Rome
Boast her supreme dominion o'er mankind ;
Still England, England is the land of song. 260
Therefore beneath whatever distant star
Roam her adventurous sons, by ocean wide
Or vast inhospitable continent
Divided from their island home ; yet all
Are bound in silken bands of brotherhood
To the dear country whence their poets sprung.
Thou, Shakespeare, fountain inexhaustible,
Whence all thy lesser brethren quench their
thirst,

268

Nor drain the riches of thine endless store,—
Now like the sea, deep, stormy, passionate ;
Now like a little brook, which merrily
Sparkles and bubbles down the velvet moss ;—
Thou hast thy meed of fame, for all the
world

Conspires to honour and exalt thy name.

And thou, whose soaring muse essayed to
pierce

The veiled mysteries of highest heaven
And deepest hell ; whose gorgeous words are
wrought,

Like dazzling jewels in some royal crown,

Into a fabric vast, imperishable, 279
Of rhythmic thought and harmonies sublime,—

Thou too, where English hearts do beat in
tune,

Hast thine abundant harvest of renown.

Yet is there somewhat in thy stately verse

I praise not wholly ; for in mind and will

If thy rebellious angels are as gods,

Thy God Himself hath less than Deity.

Thee too I praise, O lonely wanderer,

Lover of pathless woods and mountains grim,

And storm and lightning and the dark blue
sea.

How stream the rapt words from thine eloquent
tongue !

290

How the great battle-fields of ancient tale,

Bleak Marathon, and sea-girt Salamis,

Stand out, illumined and made manifest

By the swift magic of thy charmèd pen !

And ye too, not inglorious company

Of lesser bards, who, though your notes be
low,

Yet, like the fainter songsters of the woods,

Murmur your undercurrent of sweet sound ;

Be not ye too forgotten or untold.

What seaman's lay can match the buoyant
life

300

Of thy melodious and heart-stirring song,

Inspirèd Campbell ? Who like gentle Gray

H h

Told all the grave enchantment and deep
calm

Of the dim twilight and the lone churchyard ?
Who caught the spirit and genius of his race
In one short strain like Thomson ? or what
bard

Clothed wit and wisdom in so fair a dress
As clear-brained, eloquent, sententious Pope ?
Sing on, true hearts and voices musical !
Sing on, sing ever ; and exalt your song 310
With new-learnt praise of Christ and lore
of heaven.'

So spake He ; and the minstrels, one by
one,

Worshipped the Prince of Art and Minstrelsy.
Then, clad as servitors, they decked the board
With fair white linen, and brought in the
feast,—

Good venison from the woods of Blenheim's
lord,

With savoury herbs and bread of purest
meal.

Wine of the grain, in argent cups of price,
Served they likewise,—such as our valiant sires,
Who fought at Crecy's field and Agincourt, 320
Drank with good will, and cheered their hearts
withal.

Then came the little sweet-voiced choristers,
And sang, for His delight, Whose sovran
care
Made all things good, and man of all things
best
(So he but rightly use the gifts of Heaven,)
The accustomed hymn of praise. But when
they ceased,
Behold, a youthful poet, with long hair,
Bright-eyed, of visage pale, uplifting voice,
Sang a new song of Oxford and of Christ.

‘Methought I wandered once in the still
time,

330

When o'er the sleeping earth the lamps of
night

Watched from the windows of their vault
sublime,

Unto the Muses’ city. From the height,
Which spring doth paint with many a blue-
bell bright,

I saw her piles of fretted stone-work lie
Before me, frosted in the pale moonlight,
And heard her bells, which under the clear
sky,

Rang out in silvery chime their long-drawn
melody.

'(It was that saddest day which man had known,

Wherein the Lord's Heart did almost despair;)
I bent my steps the lonely hill-side down,
And crossed the stream, and up the street
did fare

342

Unto St. Mary's ancient porch, and there
Beneath the shadow of its spire did stand;
Admiring much, that man should poise in air
A thing so well and curiously planned,—

How great the artist's skill, how sure the work-
man's hand !

'Then through the silence heard I a far sound
Of voices, borne from out the distant shrine,
And cloudlike forms did seem to float around,
With censers of pure gold and harps divine,
And high in the midst the Cross of Christ
did shine.

352

From aisle to aisle I watched them sweep
along,
Till at the altar's steps they closed their
line;

The while in measured tones, subdued and
strong,

On the hushed air they poured the triumph of
their song.

‘And thus they sang, “The harvest-time is come,
The years are full, the Lord of Life is near,
Soon will He bring His exiled children home,
Soon in His temple glorious will appear. 360
Rejoice, sweet souls, who love your Master dear,
Your weary sojourn in the grave is past ;
The long night vanishes, the morn is here ;
The clouds break open, and the Sun at last,
New-risen o’er the world his golden beams doth cast.”’

But when the strain was done, grave Milton rose,
And sang, he too, a dream of Christ restored,
Not to fair Oxford, nor to mortal eyes
Displayed in glory ; but in lowly guise,—
A wanderer in the London wilderness,— 370
As when He dwelt, a simple workman’s Child,
At Nazareth, and Israel knew Him not.

‘The night was dark ; a curtain of thick cloud
Shut out the blue heavens and the stars from sight,
And its low misty skirts, as with a shroud,

Did the great City's face envelope quite.
Along the mazy lines of winding light
The stream of men swept onward, and the
 roar
Of many voices filled the air of night,—
As when at sea, a driving breeze before, 380
The noisy waves rush up and leap upon the
 shore.

' But on that night, though few the seed could
 trace,
A mighty Work was silently begun,
Which should at length all heaven and earth
 embrace.
Man's toil, for good or ill, was almost done ;
And the last sands of history did run.
For, having cast aside the radiant mask,
Wherewith the Father had endued His Son,
He, for Whose promised Advent man did
 ask,
Had answered to the call⁴, and entered on His
 task. 390

' No shouts arose to greet Him when He
 came,
No meteor lit the sky with sudden day,
No angel's voice triumphant did proclaim

His Presence, Whom all creatures should
obey.

Alone and wrapt in thought He went His
way,

Like to a man bent on some distant quest,
Who, after painful doubt and long delay,
Descries afar the goal towards which he
prest,

And joyfully steps on, with quickened hope
possest.

'What saw the Lord, now on His earth
again?

From late-born men what voices met His
Ear?

401

Welcomed the world His long-expected
reign?

Saw they the God, hid 'neath His lowly
gear?

No—His appearing moved nor hope nor
fear;

The world was all in all, and Christ forgot.

Only a poor child dried the silent tear,

Who for His gentle ruth despised Him
not,

But, feeling heaven more near, grew thankful
with his lot.

'In the great future rapt, He journeyed on :
The dreary paths, which lay before Him
spread, 410
Alive with flowers unto His fancy shone,
Sown by the friendly fingers of the dead.
Their spirits watched above His peaceful
Head ;
Their aiding whispers, through the inquiet
air,
Hopes of a world new-born within Him bred ;
While harps invisible of angels fair
Made music in His Heart, and bade Him not
despair.'

Once more of London, the world's capital,
The million-peopled City, which outstrips
In huge extent all cities of all time, 420
Scott to his rapid measure tuned a strain.

'If thou wouldst view the great City aright,
Go, visit it in the first hour of night⁵ ;
When the last red rays of the sun are gone,
And, skirting the river's rampart of stone,
The lamps shine out, till a necklace of flames
Fringes the banks of the broad, dark Thames :
And, borne on arches o'er river and road,
The steam-cars rush with their living load,

Like dragons running amain for a prize, 430
With smoking breath and with flaming
eyes.

Then mount the stairs, which border the
stream,

And stand where the yellow lights denser
gleam

Round the House, through all the wide
world renowned,

With tower and buttress and battlement
crowned,

Moulded and fretted like stony lace,—

Where sits the great Council of our race.

‘ Yet once again, when the sun is high,
Wend to the time-worn Minster hard by :
And, standing where the four aisles meet,
With honour and loving reverence greet 441
The souls of the famous dead, who have
found

A resting-place under that hallowed ground.

Mark how the tinted sunlight sheds

Its network of glory over their heads ;

And listen, as the triumphant song

In waves of harmony sweeps along,

Telling of Him, Whose Word most sure

Faithful and True to the end doth endure.

'Then homeward as thy steps thou dost
tell,
Say thou, "I have seen the great City
well."'

451

So wore the day, till all the guardian elms
In the broad avenue grew dark and dim
Against the grey vault of the sunless sky.
Then, as the sweet bells rang for evensong,
To Wykeham's shrine the Master went His
way.

Dark in the storied windows overhead
Prophet and saint loomed from their crystal
frames ;

But every stall was thick o'er-canopied
With golden blooms of autumn and the leaves
Of pale-green mistletoe. The joyful choir 461
Came forth to meet their Master, and the
strain,

Swelling in strong majestic unison,
Rose from sonorous voices : "Blessed be
The God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord ;
Which hath, according to His boundless Grace,
Unto a lively hope begotten us
By the Resurrection of His Son.' Thereat
Rang out a boyish voice, like sunbeam clear
Piercing a cloud : 'Since He that callèd you

- Is holy, be ye holy, having love 471
One towards another.' 'Being born again,'
Sounded once more the deeper antiphon,
'No more of human seed, corruptible,
But incorruptible, by the Word of God.
All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man
As flower of grass.' Now with united voice
They raised the final hymn of victory,
Weaving their several parts, like silken threads,
Into rich tissue of harmonious sound, 480
'The word of the Lord endureth evermore.'
- Within the walls no nameless throng was
ranged,
But the great princes of philosophy
And flower of English wisdom ;—on this side,
The sage who deemed Earth's fleeting outward
show
Mere shadow of the sole-existing Mind ;
On the other side, who taught that Man him-
self
Is Nature's servant and interpreter,
Powerless without her aid and knowing nought.
Locke, Mill and Hartley filled the neighbour-
ing stalls, 490
With Spencer, last not least, whose pregnant
thought
Essayed to comprehend in one vast law

The various workings of the universe.

With Berkeley sate three Churchmen, late in
time

Born, to enlarge the borders of our Church,
And mate religion with philosophy;

Then Coleridge,—tuneful bard and sage pro-
found,—

Who to their very fountain traced the streams
Of human knowledge. These and divers more,
Gathered that evening in the temple dim, 500
Saw Christ the King, and knew Him Prince of
Life,

Yet knew not wholly Christ the Power of God.

Now when the last notes of the kneeling
priest

Died into silence, rose a reverend head
From where he sate amidst his peers, and spake
After this fashion; showing how the soul,
Which knows not God, so it but upward strive,
Hath yet the seeds of bliss and its own heaven.

‘ I stood at sunset once on the high tower,
Which looks o’er Venice and her belt of sea.
No blaze of red, nor flood of golden fire 511
Gilded the sun’s departure; but a cloud,
Dull, damp and motionless, clung to his skirts,
Saddening the West. But now beneath my
feet

A lamp shot through the darkness, and anon
Another and another, till the squares
And lanes and threads of glimmering water-
street

Were dotted with a thousand points of flame,
Which braved the night till the new day
appeared.

E'en so, I thought, now that the súpreme light
Lit near two thousand years agone by Christ
Is fading from our eyes, it needs must be 522
Some little lamps pass the day's secret on,
Till there arise a yet more glorious morn.
And sure this flame, though kindled by man's
hand,

Nor claiming effluence from high God, nor
borne

O'er many lands to gladden many hearts,
Boasts yet a joy and poëtry all its own.
It may be that no temples, wrought in gold
And marble, rise to do it praise, nor priests 530
Chant their mysterious monodies to its fame :
Yet in its self-sufficing loneliness

Is strength, to steel the heart against despair ;
To dwarf mean grief; to shed a calm on joy,
And take from life its noisy nothingness.
I know no joy like his, who, having grasped
The clue to the world's secret, sees the threads

Dissociable, on which his life seemed hung,
Woven anew in one great woof, which girds
The world of men and beasts and flowers and
things ;

540

Watches the chill stars of his boyish faith
Sink, as he journeys through the lonesome night,
Fixing his soul's eye on the expected day ;
And, shrinking not from the bright vision, keeps
Firm feet, turned ever truthward. Say not, then,
That life for him is meaningless, nor death
Joyless ; for why should death his soul appal,
Knowing the self-same living energy
Powerful to work afresh in other hearts ;—
Who, not unmindful of high hopes, first sown
Perchance by words of his, will hand the torch
Onward, and in the fulness of the days 552
Gaze on great things he looked for, seeing not ?'

Then rose another, and made deep complaint
How that the world, as when the Lord yet
lived,

Clung to old forms whereof the soul had fled.
' There are, who, watching as the hand of
Time

Marks with decay the worship which they
loved,
See for high thoughts and deathless deeds of
love

No new to-morrow, but in dull despair 560
Repeat faint elegies of a dying creed,
Mourn o'er the past in vain, and mourning die.
“The priests,” say they, “who moved mankind
of yore,

Walk in the tombs, and utter words of Christ
To men who wag the head, and heed them
not.

The world is dying, yea, is well-nigh dead ;
And the Great, Righteous Judge prepares to
drain

On the lost earth the vials of His Wrath.”
I am not of their mind, but rather hold
That such do err or fondly dream. O Christ,
If Thou, Whose Name these palsied tongues
repeat 571

So lightly, wert but by, to see them pour
Driblets of science on the lees of faith,
And hear them mince those burning words of
Thine,

As if forsooth some charm lay hid therein,
Whose very utterance gave the dead soul life ;
How wouldst thou bare Thy vengeful Arm
again,

And lend Thy mild eyes to rebuke and scorn,
And bid the slothful dreamers dare or die, 579
To bring glad tidings of new truth to men !

Then He, Who knew their doubts and
troubles vain,
Opened their eyes, and lo, the heaven of
heavens,
Seen through the lofty chapel's parted roof,
Brake open ; and the wingèd host of God,—
Angels and Cherubim and Seraphim,—
Filled all the blue space, and with lifted hands
Adoring, bent before the sapphire Throne.
And a great hymn, most like the gentle breeze,
Which stirs the sleeping leaves and makes them
sing

In the long twilight of a summer eve, 590
Came wafted down the golden stairs, and filled
All heaven with melody : ‘ We praise Thee God,
We laud and magnify Thy wondrous Name ;
Lord of the mind, but of the heart likewise !
Who more than all the wit of wisest men
Lovest the praises of a little child :
Whose Church, once militant, triumphant now,
Sown with the blood of martyrs, shall live on,
And with its leaves healing all nations
Bloom, as the Tree of Life, for evermore ! ’ 600

Seven days within the Muses’ town the Lord
Tarried ; but when the festal week had past,
And now the unwearied earth prepared once
more

Round the bright sun her orbit to renew ;
Then with His seraphs and the elected band
Of English sailors, journeying as the wind,
To the huge Capital He made His way.
The boyish scholars of the royal school ^m
Came to salute Him, as His fiery car
Flew on its iron track beside the towers 610
Of the high Castle, where our sovereigns dwell.
Anon He neared the City, and thick gloom,
Bred by the smoke of multitudinous fires,
'Gan overspread the distant firmament.
But at His Presence all the murky mist
Vanished, and as in mountain regions clear,
Gleamed the deep azure of the sunlit sky.
In truth the vast and dull metropolis
Seemed to have cast its mourning, and shone
out
Ablaze with colour, as the fields in June, 620
When mid the green blades of the ripening
wheat
Dance the red poppy and the cornflower blue.
For every lattice had its waving flag ;
And all the streets were bordered with deep lines
Of scarlet soldiery, whose tunics brave
Well matched the valiant mettle of their hearts.
Here with their ponderous caps of sable fur

^m Eton.

Were ranged the stalwart Grenadiers ; and there
The bare-legged Highlanders and trim Hussars.
Here, with white horse-hair plume and steel
cuirass, 630

Like statues on their gallant chargers sate
The tall Life-Guardsmen ; there the pennons
waved

Of Lancers with quaint cap and flashing spear.
To right shone broidered tunics and red crest
Of the Oxford Blues ; to left rode gallant
Greys

With heavy-armed Dragoons, as on that day,
When breasting Balaclava's fatal hill
Fearless they rushed to no uncertain death.

But first a grey-haired chief, whose lofty brow,
Keen eye, and prominent high-archèd nose 640
Proclaimed him Arthur the great English
duke,—

Approached the Lord, and with grave speech
subdued

Did homage to his heaven-born Emperor.
' Almighty God of battles, Whose strong Arm
Against an unjust multitude maintains
Though weak a righteous cause ! behold this
host,

In numbers scant, but with high courage
dowered

Beyond all other. These heroic hearts,
Who now salute Thee, fought the livelong day
On the renownèd field of Waterloo. 650
Against their stedfast and unflinching line
Broke in vain fury, wave on wave, the flower
Of that tremendous army, which had striven
For the sole mastery of the subject world.
Scarce human seemed the unconquerable will
Of their fierce General, whom no defeat
Baffled, nor exile nor the leaguèd powers
Of all the realms of Europe could dismay.
But on that day sank his victorious star 659
To rise no more. Thereat the world rejoiced,
Free from his galling chain, and many years
The wearied lands of Christendom had peace.
Yonder thou seest brave Marlborough, skilled
in war,
Who turned the tide of French invasion,
What time the banners of the ambitious kingⁿ
Threatened the imperial citadel, and well-nigh
Plucked from his Austrian head the Cæsar's
bay.
But this our duke on many a bloody field,—
At Blenheim, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet,—
Chastised their Gallic insolence, and drove 670
The encroaching lilies from the eagle's nest.

ⁿ Louis XIV.

Nor Clive, bold founder of our Indian realm,
Wilt Thou forget; nor Wolfe, whose dying
ears

Caught the wild clamours of his flying foe,—
Of no mere province he the conqueror,
But of a boundless continent, which spreads
To either ocean, and is lost amid
The pathless glaciers of the frozen Pole.

See here the chief, who, making equal cause
With France our sometime foe, led English
arms

680

Against the Giant of the North, and freed
The heart of Islam from the Bear's embrace.
Yonder are Lawrence and brave Havelock,
The staunch defenders of our Eastern sway:
And last, not least, Gordon the chivalrous,
Who, strong in simple loyalty, had heart,
Unguarded, single-handed, to set forth
Into a hostile region, and defied
With his undaunted arm a barbarous land.'

688

To whom the Lord of Glory answering spake
'Hail doughty warriors, whose triumphant arms,
Have with a network of dependent tracts
Each quarter of the world encompassèd!
Not more I praise your prowess, than the right
And justice, which hath graced your country's
cause:

For, if not always, yet ye chiefly strove
To save the oppressed, or to defend your own.
Therefore the staff of empire and the star
Of victory shall not wholly quit your hands,
Nor shall an alien conqueror tread your shores ;
But your dominion, based on righteousness,
True freedom and sweet reverent fear, shall
last

702

Within the Realm of Christ inviolate,
And blossom in the Paradise of God.'

So speaking, through the well-armed veterans
He rode rejoicing to that fountained square,
Where stands sublime upon his Doric shaft
The sculptured form of our great Admiral.
Here in their open jackets and broad hats—
Brave hearts and bronzed faces,—thronged the
men,

710

Who at the Nile and at Trafalgar's bay
Followed their chief to death and endless fame.
Nelson, the darling of our race and prince
Of English heroes, wearing on his breast
Those fatal stars which drew the marksman's
aim,

And holding still that optic glass, wherewith
He braved the craven signal of retreat,—
Came at the head of his bold mariners.
No cold obeisance made he, but ran up

719

And with his arms embraced the Master's feet.
For Nelson was of those rare-tempered men,
Like to the Lord Himself, who do great deeds
Because the fire of love constraineth them.
Who as he lay hard at the door of death
In his good ship, the famous 'Victory,'
Was not content until his brow was kissed
By the brave friend and comrade of his youth^o.
Therefore his acts have strength and poëtry,
Which all the soul of Shakespeare cannot match.
Therefore his last words to his gallant fleet 730
Are, and shall be, the watchword of our
race,—

Best, bravest words e'er spoke by English
tongue.

Blake, too, was there, who wrested from the
Dutch

The Sceptre of the Seas, and valiant Howe,
Who triumphed on the glorious First of June,
With Rodney and St. Vincent; nor were they
Wanting, who humbled the presumptuous might
And fierce devotion of the Iberian king,
What time his huge Armada, stored with wealth
From either hemisphere, essayed to cross 740
The sundering stream of ocean, and insult
The sacred land of love and liberty.

^o Captain Hardy.

But God, as once to Pharaoh and his host,
Dealt havoc mid their line, Who sent His
winds,
Stirred with His rod of might the obedient
waves,
And overwhelmed them in the hungry main.

Now Nelson, holding o'er his Lord unfurled
The imperial sign of British unity,
(For there on crimson field St. George's Cross
Is traversed by St. Andrew's, and the space 750
Filled at each angle by St. Patrick's blue,)
Sought the great Senate-house, where prince
and peer,
Burgess and knight, with mixt authority
Frame the proud edifice of English law.
Forth from their Chamber issued, as He came,
The crowned and crimson-robèd councillors,—
Duke, Marquis, Earl, with Viscount and plain
Lord,—
Each with the bands of ermine, which beseemed
His various rank, and added count of pearls
Or broidered leaves around each diadem. 760
Foremost, in sable gown adorned with gold,
Walked the high champion and interpreter
Of law and right, a fleece of snow-white wool
Crowning his brow and falling o'er his robe ;
While in the rear the simpler Commons came,

Black-robed, their reverend spokesman at their head.

Bold Chatham here, as when his fainting voice
Rose for the last time mid the listening peers,—
There, was the counsellor of our maiden queen,
Grave Burleigh. Thou too, terror of the French,

770

Whose fiery genius ever and again
Nerved the downstricken states, and urged
them on
To fight for hearth and home against the might

Of Gaul and her usurping emperor,—
Nor thou, nor he who matched thine eloquence
Was absent^p. Scions of each noble house,
Howard and Percy, Talbot, Stanley, Vere;
Scotch Douglas, too, and Campbell, bowed the knee

To the Lord Paramount of earth and heaven.
He with His joyous and triumphant train 780
Tarried not long within the gilded hall,
But to the royal minster fared straightway;
For ‘Not of speech, nor of new-fashioned laws

The times have need,’ quoth He; ‘to God alone,

^p Pitt and Fox.

Who doth create you ministers this day
In the Everlasting Kingdom of His Son,
Glory and praise by every mouth be given.'

Now twilight round the temple of the Lord
Stole with dark wings, and lent its mystery
To glimmering wall, high roof, and pillars
grey.

790

Dim through the gorgeous windows, north and
south,
Which, like twin heaven-born roses luminous,
Spread the delight of their rich-jewelled
leaves,—

Streamed the last day, and candles here and
there
Mingled their warm light with the doubtful
eve;

When He, the Sun Who nevermore should
set,

Entered His Tabernacle, and Glory shone—
The Glory of the Triune Deity,—
O'er the whole house from His ambrosial Brow.
High on the altar gleamed the mystic Light,
Fraught with the fulfilled destinies of man, 801
Seven-branched; one only lamp unlit remained
The light of England's wedded Church and
realm.

As on a single flowering stem sometimes

Blooms many a full-blown rose, but one late
 bud

Retires its modest head, and late unfolds
The deep carnation of its perfect flower ;
So stood the last unkindled English branch
Upon the blessed, mystic Candlestick.

Thereat the winged Arch-Seraph, who at
 first

810

Stood by the Throne and knew the Eternal
 Will,

Took in his hand a taper, and filled up
The number of the sacred lights, and knelt
Before the Anointed Son of God Most High,
Singing, 'The Kingdoms of the world have
 passed,

Like visions of a dream, and are become
One Kingdom of our LORD and of His
 CHRIST.'

FINIS.

NOTES TO BOOK XII.

- 1 l. 147. Wolsey, Waynflete and Wykeham were the founders, respectively, of Christ Church, Magdalen, and New College.
- 2 l. 152. *England's loyalest town.* See Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion,' Bk. VI. 'Oxford, the only city in England which Charles could say was entirely at his devotion.'
- 3 l. 167. Compare Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act I.
‘How’s the night?’
‘Almost at odds with morning, which is which.’
- 4 l. 390. Compare the closing scene of Thackeray's ‘Newcomes.’ ‘And he, whose soul was as that of a little child, had answered to the call, and was in the presence of his Maker.’
- 5 l. 423. These two lines are of course adapted from the well-known lines in the ‘Lay of the Last Minstrel.’
‘If thou would’st view fair Melrose aright
Go visit it in the pale moonlight.’
- 6 l. 481. The reference is to S. S. Wesley's famous Anthem. The words are from 1 St. Peter i.

ERRATUM.

P. 285, for Gautana read Gautama.

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